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COUNSELS AND REFLECTIONS

OF

FRANCESCO GUICCIARDINI.



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FRANCESCO GUICCIARDINI.

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN

BY

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PREFACE.

THE *Ricordi Politici e Civili* of Francesco Guicciardini, from which this translation is made, appeared for the first time in an authentic form in the year 1857, being included in the first of the ten volumes of Guicciardini's miscellaneous writings published by the Counts Piero and Luigi Guicciardini under the editorship of Signor Giuseppe Canestrini.[1]

Signor Canestrini's collection contains 403 *Ricordi*, taken, as he informs us, in their original integrity from two separate manuscripts, both in the author's handwriting, which had been preserved with the archives

[1] *Opere inedite di Francesco Guicciardini illustrate da Giuseppe Canestrini, e pubblicate per cura dei Conti Piero e Luigi Guicciardini.* Firenze, 1857–67.

of the Guicciardini family in Florence. As regards the first of these manuscripts, which supplies the *Ricordi* Nos. 1–221, we have no clue beyond what is afforded in the *Ricordi* themselves for ascertaining the date at which it was written. But the reference in *Ricordo* No. 1 to the Florentines having then for seven months withstood the attack of the joint armies of Pope and Emperor, and in No. 131 to their continued successful resistance; together with the mention in No. 171 of Carducci, Gualterotti, Altoviti, and Giugni as then representing Florence in France, Venice, Siena, and Ferrara respectively, make it certain that, as far as the last-named number, the whole of the *Ricordi* contained in this manuscript were written between May and August 1530, during the siege of Florence, and before the fall of the Republican Government.[1] The remaining fifty *Ricordi* may reasonably be assumed to have been written about the same time as those which

[1] At this time Guicciardini was in Rome: see note at page 173 to Reflection No. I.

precede them; at any rate, they cannot be assigned to an earlier date.

The other manuscript, from which Canestrini derived the *Ricordi* Nos. 222–403 of his edition, has on the first page a note in Guicciardini's handwriting to the effect that its contents had been transcribed by him in the beginning of the year 1528, "at a time when he had much leisure," from other note-books written before 1525.[1] Farther on there is a second autograph entry, inserted between the *Ricordi* numbered 393 and 394 in Canestrini's edition, intimating that the Reflections which follow were begun to be added in April 1528.[2]

It will be seen, from what has been said, that the first of the two manuscripts is of later date than the second by two years, and

[1] "Scritti innanzi al 1525 in altri quaderni che in questo; ma ridotti qui *nel principio dell anno* 1528, nel grandissimo ozio che avevo; insieme con la più parte di quelli che sono drieto in questo quaderno." It is to be remembered that at this time the Florentine year began on the 25th March.

[2] "Aggiunta comminciata d Aprile 1528."

it being further obvious, on a comparison of the two series of *Ricordi*, that most of those in the second are repeated, some of them nearly *verbatim* in the first, it must be taken that the first series is a revised and amended edition of the second, and that the two series cannot properly be regarded as forming one continuous work. It is therefore not a little surprising to find Signor Canestrini so treating them, and referring in his preface to the whole of the 403 *Ricordi* printed by him as "written consecutively and numbered continuously by Guicciardini himself." [1]

To remove any doubt which Signor Canestrini's words might occasion, it may be mentioned that on an application made on my behalf by my esteemed friend Professor Pasquale Villari to Count Francesco, the present head of the Guicciardini family, that gentleman, with the most obliging courtesy, caused the two manuscripts to be inspected by his archivist, Signor Gherardi, who reports

[1] "Scritti da Guicciardini tutti di séguito . . . e numerati progressivamente."—*Op. Ined.*, vol. i. p. xxvii.

them to be wholly distinct, and the series of *Ricordi* contained in each to be separately and independently numbered; the first series consisting of 221, the second of 182 *Ricordi*.

That both series should have come down to us is certainly a fortunate circumstance; not only because several important Reflections not reproduced in the later manuscript are preserved in the earlier, but also because a collation of the two throws light on the author's method of writing, and shows how much care he used to clothe his thoughts in the fittest words. Additional interest attaches to the manuscript of 1528, as the probable source from which all the various unauthorised versions of the *Ricordi*, published under different titles towards the close of the sixteenth century, were taken.

Whether Guicciardini ever contemplated the publication of his *Ricordi* seems doubtful. On the one hand, it may be thought that, save with this intention, he would not have given the time and pains it must have cost

him to write, revise, alter, transcribe, and re-transcribe them. On the other hand, many private opinions are expressed in them which he could hardly have desired to be made generally known to his contemporaries. To himself, the chief utility of the collection was as a storehouse of profound reflections and rules of conduct, to be drawn on for the adornment or illustration of his other writings. A large number of these *Ricordi* will accordingly be found reproduced in his *Istoria d'Italia*, where they give dignity and point to the speeches which the author, following the example of the Greek and Roman writers, assigns to well-known public men. Many of them reappear in the interesting *Dialogue on the Government of Florence*, in which Bernardo del Nero, Piero Capponi, Pagolantonio Soderini, and the author's father, Piero Guicciardini, are made the interlocutors. Others, again, will be found in the *Considerations on Machiavelli's Discourses on Livy*; in the *Speeches* purporting to have been spoken on various occasions by Guicciardini himself;

and in the remarkable *Meditation* written by him "during the time of the plague" at Finocchieto, in the year 1527, after he had lost his post as Governor of the province of Romagna. Even in his private correspondence we find the *Ricordi* reappearing in a shape easy to recognise.[1]

None of Guicciardini's writings were printed during his lifetime. When, twenty-one years after his death, the *Istoria d'Italia* was at last permitted to appear, the maxims of political and private conduct scattered through its pages drew much attention. A collection of these was made and printed in a separate table by *Thomaso Porcacchi* in his annotated edition of the *Istoria*, published at Venice in 1574.

In 1576 *Jacopo Corbinelli*,[2] an Italian gentleman who had been employed by the Queen Mother, Catherine de' Medici, as

[1] The *Storia Fiorentina*, which is believed to have been an early work of the author, contains fewer of these Reflections than any other of his writings.

[2] Corbinelli is very favourably spoken of by Bayle, *Dict. Hist.* vol. ii. p. 214. Amsterdam, 1740.

instructor of her son, the young Duke of Anjou, now become King Henry III. of France, printed in Paris a volume[1] containing 158 Reflections, most of them corresponding closely with *Ricordi* given in the Guicciardini manuscript of 1528. The different order in which they stand as printed by Corbinelli from that in which they occur in the author's manuscript, is explained in a letter to Monsignore Pomponio Believre, in which Corbinelli claims credit for having given the work a more consecutive arrangement than it had when it came into his hands. Corbinelli's text is accompanied by notes suggesting sources whence Guicciardini may have derived his ideas, and references are supplied to parallel passages in the

[1] *Più Consigli et Avvertimenti di M. Fr. Guicciardini, Gentilhuomo Fior. in materia di re publica et di privata, nuovamente mandati in luce.* Parigi, Morello, 1576. The words "*nuovamente mandati in luce*" seem to have led Manni into the erroneous belief that Corbinelli's book was a reprint of an earlier publication. See "*Vita di Francesco Guicciardini scritta dal Sig. Domenico Maria Manni*," printed with Pasquali's edition of the *Istoria d'Italia.* Venice, 1738, vol. i. p. 12.

Istoria d'Italia. For assistance in this last labour acknowledgment is made to M. Isidoro Ruberti, secretary to the Papal Nuncio. Corbinelli, however, modestly observes :—"In the matter of illustration much may still remain to be done by others more intelligent than I am, and who shall have access to a more complete copy of *this book* than I possess; it being the general opinion that many passages therein contained have been suppressed, and these, as seems likely, the most important."[1]

Although the series of *Ricordi* printed by Corbinelli corresponds so nearly with the Guicciardini manuscript of 1528 that there is good ground for believing it to have been taken from that source, there are yet points

[1] By "*this book*" Signor Canestrini understands Corbinelli to mean the copy of the *Ricordi* which had come into his hands; but it is also possible that he may have been referring to the *Istoria d'Italia*, from which he drew his illustrations, and which, as is well known, was printed at first in a mutilated form. Corbinelli informs us that for the first sixteen books of the *Istoria* his citations are made from the Venetian edition of 1562, and for the last four books from the edition of 1564.

of variance. Thirty-three *Ricordi* of the 1528 manuscript are wanting in Corbinelli, while five *Ricordi* given by Corbinelli are wanting in the manuscript of 1528, but bear some resemblance to *Ricordi* in the manuscript of 1530. Seven others which appear in Corbinelli have no counterpart in either manuscript.[1] These variations suggest the possibility that Corbinelli's collection may have been taken from a copy of the manuscript which Guicciardini tells us he had written before 1525, and from which that of 1528 was transcribed. This of course is a mere conjecture, which, as the manuscript in question has been lost, cannot be verified.[2] It may be noticed, however, as bearing on the point, that in Corbinelli's *Ricordo* No. 64, which is not found in the Guicciardini manuscript of 1528, and which differs substantially from *Ricordo* No. 64 of the manuscript of

[1] This will be better understood by reference to the Tables printed at pp. xxvii–xxxi.

[2] Signor Gherardi reports that no trace of this manuscript is now to be found among the Guicciardini archives.

1530, reference is made to Prospero Colonna as though he were then living; the inference being that Corbinelli copied, at second hand, from a manuscript written before Prospero's death, which took place towards the end of the year 1523. It may likewise be noted that while the *Ricordo* No. 38 of Corbinelli's series bears a closer resemblance in form of expression to No. 55 of the manuscript of 1528 (No. 276 in Canestrini) than to No. 50 of the manuscript of 1530, it accords with the latter in citing by way of illustration the names of *Ser Giovanni da Poppi* and *Ser Bernardo da San Miniato*, instead of the single name of *Messer Goro*, given in the former.

From whatsoever original the copy of the *Ricordi* which came into Corbinelli's hands was taken, there can be no doubt that it was made by an ignorant or careless transcriber. No other explanation will account for the errors in which the printed text abounds, and which not merely alter, but sometimes completely reverse, the meaning of what Guicciardini wrote.

Soon after the appearance of Corbinelli's book, *Francesco Sansovino* printed at Venice the first edition of his *Concetti Politici*, dedicating his work to the Emperor Rodolph II., in a letter dated the 24th February 1578. Sansovino's *Concetti*, to the number of 803, are gathered from the writings of thirty-six authors, whose names he gives, his largest debt being due to Machiavelli and Guicciardini. Of the Reflections which he borrows from the latter, many may be identified as taken directly from the *Istoria d'Italia*, but others agree so nearly, both in form and substance, with the *Più Consigli* of Corbinelli, that they may well be believed either to have been drawn immediately from that source, or else to have been transcribed from another copy of the manuscript on which Corbinelli had worked.

A volume of Discourses written by the learned and industrious Dominican friar *Remigio Nannini*, better known as *Remigi-Fiorentino*, on themes taken from Guicciardini's *Istoria d'Italia*, and from the works

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All the erroneous variations from the text of the manuscript of 1528 that we find in Corbinelli are reproduced in the collection of Fra Sisto, which is further defective as suppressing, for political or other reasons, fourteen *Ricordi* which Corbinelli prints.

[1] As, for example, in *Considerazione* I., where he cites *Consiglio* No. 26 (a mistake for 27) *secondo l'ordine degli stampati in Francia;*" and again in *Considerazione* XII., where reference is made to *Consiglio* No. 138 of the *French edition.*

[2] A good Latin translation of Fra Sisto's *Avvertimenti*, with the title *Hypomneses Politicae Francisci Guicciardini*, is given in the *Speculi Aulicarum atque Politicarum Observationum Libelli*, printed by Lazarus Zetner, Bibliopola Argentinensis, in 1599.

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A volume entitled *Proposizioni ovvero Considerazioni in materia di cose di Stato* was published by *Francesco Sansovino* at Venice in 1583. The book contains a second edition of his *Concetti Politici*, already noticed, together with the *Avvedimenti Civili* of Giovan Francesco Lottini,[1] and the *Avvertimenti* of Francesco Guicciardini. These last consist of the identical series printed in the previous year by Fra Sisto, and are reproduced without acknowledgment of any indebtedness to him.[2]

[1] The *Avvedimenti Civili* of Lottini were first printed at Florence in 1574, after the author's death, by his brother Girolamo. Lottini has 563 *Avvedimenti*, among which he is said by Corbinelli to have surreptitiously inserted many plagiarisms from Guicciardini. The charge seems to have been repeated by Fontanini (*Biblioteca*, vol. ii. p. 358, note by Apostolo Zeno); but, so far as I can find, has no foundation. The *Avvedimenti* are stated by Lottini's brother to be "*pieni, polposi, e molto utili a' governanti*," and Sansovino declares that "they pleased him infinitely." To the modern reader they may appear somewhat dry and tedious.

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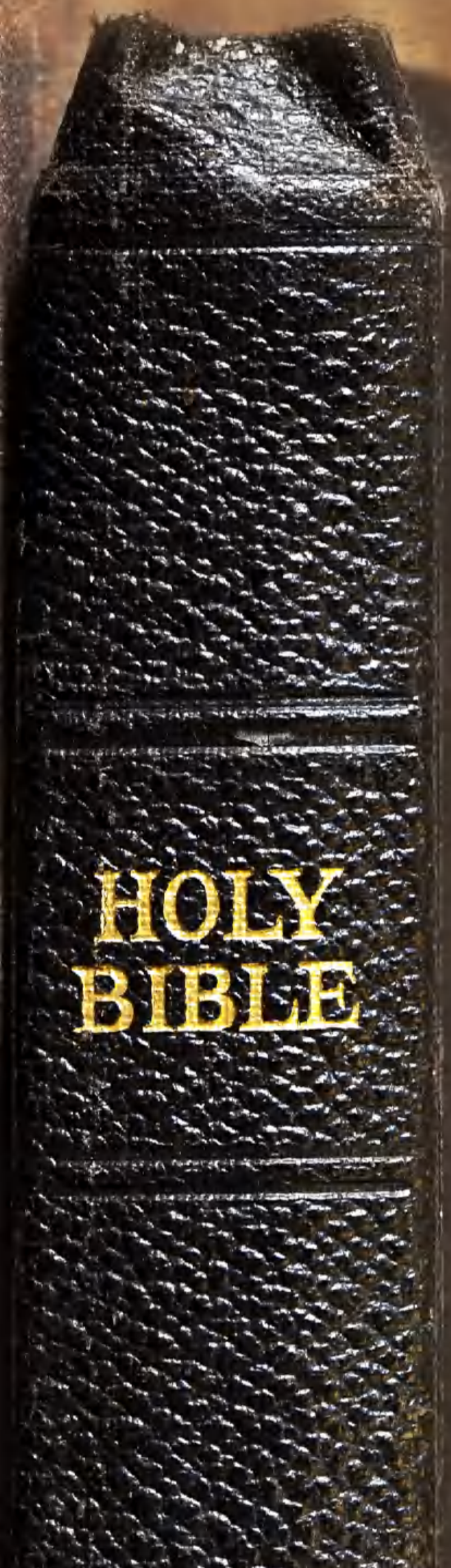
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The only other collection of Guicciardini's *Ricordi* to which special reference need here be made is that published by *Lodovico Guicciardini*, son of the historian's brother *Jacopo*, at Antwerp in 1585, entitled *I Precetti et Sententie più notabili in materia di Stato di M. Francesco Guicciardini.* The volume contains 100 *Precetti* (counsels) and 100 *Sententie* (opinions), and is preceded by a dedicatory letter to Alessandro Farnese, Prince of Parma and Piacenza, and Captain General of the Catholic King in the Low

he praises as "endowed with singular virtues, and remarkable for his acquaintance with law, history, polite learning, and the whole circle of the sciences; who, after filling various magistracies and high offices in his own country, not content with the honours, popularity, and friendships to be enjoyed there, had come, like a new Ulysses, to study the manners and customs of foreign nations; and after having seen and known many cities and men, had arrived at the conclusion that the usages and mode of government of the Italians, and more especially of the Venetians, were beyond all others worthy of admiration as bearing a close resemblance to the institutions and customs of Great Britain!" Some explorer of Venetian Archives may be able to tell us who this *nobile Britanno* was. The dedicatory letter is dated 15th April 1583. Sansovino's book was reprinted in 1588, 1598, and 1608.

Countries, to whom Lodovico writes:—"I deem it due to your Highness to present you with a selection from the weighty counsels and admirable opinions in matters of state which I have made from the original works of my uncle, M. Francesco Guicciardini." If this was meant as a claim to have drawn fresh material from these sources, it is not borne out by Lodovico's book. Of his hundred *Precetti*, the first seventy-eight, with the exception of Nos. 12 and 36, which are of doubtful origin, correspond closely with *Ricordi* already printed by Corbinelli, Fra Sisto, and Sansovino; and the same holds as to Nos. 81 and 100. Of the remaining twenty, no fewer than eighteen are plagiarised from a collection of aphorisms gathered from Greek, Latin, and French historians by the French translator of Corbinelli's book.[1] All or nearly all Lodovico's

1 *Plusieurs Advis et Conseils de Fr. Guicciardini, tant pour les affaires d'Estat que privées: avec quarante et deux Articles récuellis de plusieurs Historiographes tant Grecs que Latins et Francois.* Paris, 1576. The anonymous translator dedicates the book to *M. de Chante-*

hundred *Sententie* are extracted from the *Istoria d'Italia.*

None of the successive editors of the sixteenth century, from Corbinelli downwards, offers any explanation as to how he obtained access to Guicciardini's manuscripts or procured copies of them. This point Signor Canestrini attempts to clear up by a citation from an unpublished work of Giovanni Cinelli.[1] According to Cinelli, "Messer Piero, son of Messer Niccolò Guicciardini,[2] gave a copy of his grand-uncle's *Avvertimenti* to Don Flavio Orsini, auditor of the Camera, who was afterwards Cardinal;[3] and on the death of Messer Piero various copies of the work were dispersed, to the no small dis-

cler, advocat en Parlement. The dedication is followed by an ode signed *A.* (*Alain*) *de Laval.*

[1] *La Toscana letteraria, ovvero degli Scrittori Fiorentini*, existing in manuscript in the National Library of Florence, has never been printed.

[2] Messer Niccolò Guicciardini was the son of Luigi, eldest brother of the historian. Messer Piero died auditor of the Rota in 1567.

[3] Flavio Orsini was created Cardinal by Pope Pius IV., who died in 1565.

pleasure of the Guicciardini family. One of these copies was printed by a *lover of letters* in Venice in the year 1583." By this *lover of letters* Signor Canestrini understands Fra Remigio Nannini to have been meant. But Fra Remigio, as we have seen, had died in 1580, and was in no way responsible for the collection of *Avvertimenti* which in 1582, not 1583, the date given by Cinelli, were printed by Fra Sisto as a supplement to his book.

On the other hand, if by the "*lover of letters*" Cinelli meant Francesco Sansovino, whose edition of the *Avvertimenti* was published in the year he names, he stands convicted of ignorance in not knowing that Guicciardini's work had already been printed in 1576 by Corbinelli, and in 1582 by Fra Sisto. Much doubt would consequently rest on the whole of Cinelli's statement were it not corroborated from another quarter. It seems surprising that Signor Canestrini should have failed to remark that Cinelli's story, except in so far as it is plainly erroneous, is a literal repro-

duction of a statement of the famous *Magliabecchi*, printed by *Gamba* in the fourth edition of his *Testi di Lingua*, where he speaks of Corbinelli's book.[1] There is nothing inherently unlikely in the story as told by Magliabecchi, from whom we may believe Cinelli, his cotemporary and friend, to have taken it at second hand, adding to it his own unfortunate conjecture. The date of Corbinelli's publication, and the declaration on his title-page that the *Avvertimenti* had been "*recently given to light*," consist with the

[1] See *note* to Art. 1444, p. 428:—"Il Magliabecchi in un opuscolo dall' ab. Mehus conservato, e pubblicato poi per la prima volta nel *Poligrafo di Milano* (N. xxxvii. anno 1812, c. 590), scrive:—Io ne ho due esemplari manoscritti, ne' quali son molti varietà dagli stampati. *Messer Piero di Messer Niccolò Guicciardini dette copia dei suddetti Avvertimenti al Sig. Don Flavio Orsini, auditore della Camera Apostolica, che fu poi cardinale: e dopo la morte di Messer Piero se ne sparsero copie, con poco soddisfazione de' Guicciardini, che gli avevano tenuti segretissimi.* Sono aurei i detti *Avvertimenti*; ma a proposito di essi diceva Jacopo Pitti che il Guicciardini faceva come il gallo, cio è cantava bene e ruspava male." It would be interesting to know what became of the two *esemplari manoscritti* referred to by Magliabecchi, and wherein they differed from the printed editions.

statement that copies of the Guicciardini manuscript were made and dispersed after Messer Piero's death.

The Latin and French translations of Guicciardini's *Ricordi* have already been referred to. An English rendering of Corbinelli's collection by Mrs. Emma Martin[1] appeared in 1845, accompanied by a short sketch of Guicciardini's life, and illustrated by parallel passages from the writings of Machiavelli, Bacon, Pascal, Montesquieu, and other authors. The parallel passages are not always to the point; but the translation itself is on the whole so good, that had the text from which it is made been fuller and more faithful, a further rendering would have been superfluous.

The present version follows implicitly the text of the Guicciardini manuscripts of 1530

[1] *The Maxims of Francis Guicciardini, translated by Emma Martin.* Longmans, 1845. Mrs. Martin died in 1851, at the age of thirty-nine. A rendering in English verse of Boccaccio's tale of *The Falcon* is attributed to her in the Catalogue of the British Museum Library.

and 1528, as printed by Signor Canestrini. Some notes have been added, indicating the correspondence between the *Ricordi* of the two series, and citing passages from other works of the author in which the same ideas occur. This last task had, so far as regards the *Istoria d'Italia*, been already attempted by Corbinelli; but the recent publication of Guicciardini's miscellaneous writings opens a much wider field of comparison. Should any student of Italian literature desire to compare the various unauthorised editions of the sixteenth century with the genuine text of the author, he will find facilities afforded him in the Tables herewith printed.

For a just and profound estimate of the value of Guicciardini's writings, and of the character of the man, the reader will turn to the chapters in Professor Villari's work on *Machiavelli and his Times*, in which the merits of the two great Italian writers are weighed and contrasted.

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TABLE A (*continued*).

Guicciardini MS., 1508.	Canestrini.	Corbinelli.	Fra Sisto and Sansovino.	Lodovico Guicciardini.
49	270	76	24	34
50	271	..	..	..
51	272	..	..	..
52	273	60	25	..
53	274	42	26	78
54	275	37	27	..
55	276	38	28	..
56	277	39	29	..
57	278	156	30	..
58	279	84	132	..
59	280	26	31	67
60	281	81	32	81
61	282	82	33	38
62	283	77	34	35
63	284	126	136	..
64	285	153	35	..
65	286	154	36	..
66	287	155	37	18
67	288	148	38	..
68	289	24	39	77
69	290	25	40	..
70	291	144	41	..
71	292	..	..	..
72	293	121	42	59
73	294	7	43	71
74	295	147	44	72
75	296	6	45	..
76	297	87	47	40
77	298	62	48	21
78	299	88	49	41
79	300	47	50	..
80	301		51	..
81	302	48	52	15
82	303	49	53	..

Guicciardini MS., 1508.	Canestrini.	Corbinelli.	Fra Sisto and Sansovino.	Lodovico Guicciardini.
83	304	50	54	..
84	305	51	55	..
85	306	43	56	14
86	307	33	57	8
87	308	97	58	48
88	309	99	59	..
89	310	96	60	47
90	311	108	61	53
91	312	109	62	54
92	313	133	63	..
93	314	44	64	..
94	315	45	65	..
95	316	46	66	..
96	317	4	..	..
97	318	112	67	..
98	319	114	68	..
99	320	134	69	13
100	321	78	70	..
101	322	158	71	100
102	323	57	72	..
103	324	94	73	45
104	325	67	75	27
105	326	101	76	..
106	327	104	77	50
107	328	56	78	..
108	329	55	79	17
109	330	52	80	..
110	331	15	..	..
111	332	16	..	..
112	333	3	..	..
113	334	19	..	..
114	335	28	82	3
115	336	123	83	1
116	337	132	84	63

TABLE A (*continued*).

Guicciardini MS., 1528.	Canestrini.	Corbinelli.	Fra Sisto and Sansovino.	Lodovico Guicchardini.
117	338	124	85	..
118	339	63	87	22
119	340	79	88	..
120	341	80	89	37
121	342	34	90	9
122	343	141	91	..
123	344	69	92	26
124	345	30	93	5
125	346	..	..	..
126	347	106	94	..
127	348	20	..	..
128	349	21	95	75
129	350	128	96	..
130	351	136	97	65
131	352	131	98	..
132	353	17	..	..
133	354	1	100	..
134	355	146	99	..
135	356	135	101	64
136	357	..	..	..
137	358	58	..	..
138	359	145	102	..
139	360	40	103	..
140	361	102	104	..
141	362	125	105	..
142	363	103	106	49
143	364	41	107	..
144	365	2	108	..
145	366	120	109	58
146	367	116	110	..
147	368	130	111	2
148	369	22	112	..
149	370	73	113	31
150	371	54	114	..

Guicciardini MS., 1528.	Canestrini.	Corbinelli.	Fra Sisto and Sansovino.	Lodovico Guicciardini.
151	372	35	..	10
152	373	105	115	51
153	374	75	116	33
154	375	23	117	76
155	376	12	..	..
156	377	13	..	..
157	378	29	133	4
158	379	14	..	..
159	380	36	..	11
160	381	86	118	..
161	382	127	119	61
162	383	10	..	..
163	384	152	120	..
164	385	157	121	..
165	386	151	122	73
166	387	150	123	..
167	388	149	..	..
168	389	31	124	6
169	390	129	125	62
170	391	70	126	28
171	392	115	127	..
172	393	122	128	60
173	394	113	140	56
174	395	..	..	..
175	396	..	..	..
176	397	..	..	..
177	398	..	..	..
178	399	..	..	..
179	400	..	..	..
180	401	..	..	..
181	402	..	..	..
182	403	..	..	..

TABLE B.

Ricordi printed by Corbinelli, Fra Sisto, Sansovino, and Lodovico Guicciardini, resembling, but not identical with, Ricordi contained in the Guicciardini MS. of 1530 *printed by Signor Canestrini.*

Guicciardini MS., 1530. Canestrini.	Corbinelli.	Fra Sisto and Sansovino.	Lodovico Guicciardini.	
64	64	86	23	Changes in methods of war.
154	118	144	..	Private men cannot judge the actions of princes.
156	110	138	55	Why men feel misgivings after they have resolved.
189	11	141	..	Unhappiness to be born when your country is declining.
200	107	134	52	How to gain support from others for measures of your own.

TABLE C.

Ricordi printed by Corbinelli, Fra Sisto, Sansovino, and Lodovico Guicciardini which are not found in either of the Guicciardini MSS. printed by Canestrini.

Corbinelli.	Fra Sisto and Sansovino.	Lodovico Guicciardini.	
5	137	70	Princes not more their own masters than other men.
18	142	74	Where counsels divided compromises prevail.
85	135	39	No course so absurd that it may not find favour with some one.
100	145	..	When a friend asks you to aid him to effect some end, don't begin by pointing out difficulties.
111	139	..	Of counsel and counsellors.
117	143	..	How a prince might discredit the astrologers.
119	129	57	Do not act on first advices.

COUNSELS AND REFLECTIONS.

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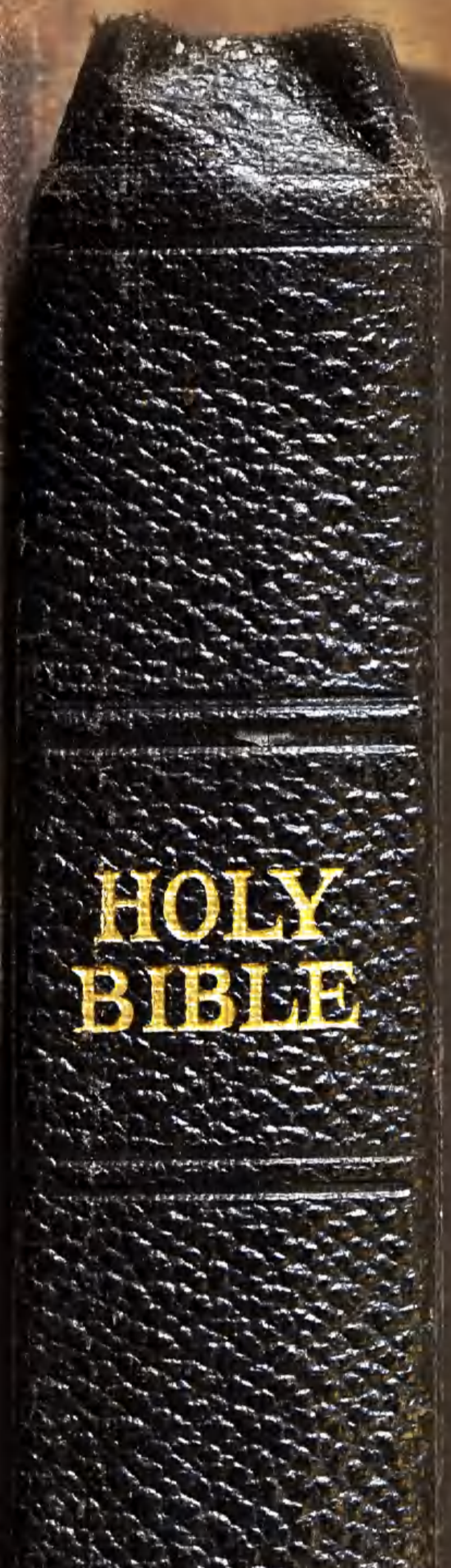
1 WHAT the devout tell us of him that hath faith accomplishing great things, and, in the words of Scripture, removing mountains, rests upon this, that faith breeds obstinacy. For faith is no more than to believe firmly and almost with certainty things not in themselves reasonable; or if reasonable, to believe them more implicitly than reason warrants. He therefore that has faith becomes stubborn in his belief, and goes on his way resolute and intrepid, contemning difficulties and dangers, and ready to suffer every extremity. Whence it happens that as the things of this world are subject to infinite changes and chances, in the course of events unlooked-for help may come in many ways to him who has obstinately persevered; which perseverance being the result of faith, it may well be said that whoso hath faith will accomplish

accomplish great things. Whereof we have at the present hour signal instance in this stubbornness of the Florentines; who having, contrary to all human reason, set themselves to await the joint attack of Pope and Emperor, without hope of aid from others, disunited among themselves, and encompassed by difficulties on every side, have for seven months withstood behind their walls the assaults of armies against whom it seemed impossible they could hold out for as many days; nay, have brought things to such a point that whereas at first all deemed them lost, were they now to conquer, none would be surprised. And this stubbornness of theirs is mainly due to the belief that, as Friar Girolamo of Ferrara told them in his sermons, they cannot be destroyed.

2 In sending forth ambassadors to treat with foreign courts, certain princes will freely make known to them their secret mind and the ends their negotiations are meant to serve. Others, again, judge it better only to impart what they would have the foreign prince persuaded of, thinking they can hardly deceive him unless they first deceive the ambassador who is to be the instrument and agent for treating with him.

Something

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My own opinion is that the prince who has discreet and honest ambassadors, and such as are well affected towards him, and so well cared for by him that they have no motive to look elsewhere, will do better to open his mind to them fully; but that unless sure of their being of this sort, his safest plan is not to take them altogether into his confidence, but let the impressions he conveys to them be the ground they are to go on in persuading the foreign prince.

3 Experience shows us that princes, and even great princes, have much ado to find competent ministers. None will wonder that this should happen where the prince is too dull to know men, or too niggardly to reward them; but that it should happen with a prince who is free from both defects seems truly astonishing, when we consider how many there are of all ranks who desire to serve him, and the means he has at his disposal for requiting them. And yet to one who looks deeper into the matter it ought not to appear so strange. For the minister of a prince, I mean one who has to serve him in affairs of moment, must not only be of great capacity, and such men are rare, but must also

be

be of sterling honesty, a qualification perhaps even rarer than the other. And if we do not readily find men possessed of either of these qualities separately, how much harder must it be to find men in whom both are united?

This difficulty should determine a prudent prince (that he may not have to think from day to day of all that has to be done), to make provision beforehand, choosing certain untrained men, whom, by proving them in one employment and another, he may accustom to his requirements, while by his bounty towards them he binds them to his interests. For though it be difficult for him on a sudden to find trained men of the sort indicated, he may reasonably hope in time to train them. It is well seen that secular princes, when they use due diligence, are better supplied with ministers than the Popes are, since more respect is paid to a secular prince, and greater hope is entertained of remaining long in his service. For, commonly speaking, the secular prince lives longer than the Pope, and is followed by a successor who is almost identical with him, and who can readily trust those servants who have been employed or who have begun to be employed by his predecessor. Add to this that from the ministers

of

of a secular prince being likewise his subjects, or at any rate drawing their income from sources within his control, they have always reason to fear and reverence both him and his successors. The same does not hold in the case of the Popes, who being as a rule short-lived, have little time to train new servants, and not the same ground for trusting the servants of their predecessors, these being for the most part natives of countries independent of the Papacy, whose emoluments come from benefices not under the control of their master or his successors, and who, as they neither fear the new Pope nor hope to be continued in his service, are less likely to be zealous and faithful than those who serve a secular sovereign.

4 If princes, when all goes well with them, make little account of their servants, and slight them or set them aside out of the merest caprice, how can they be displeased or complain if their servants, so long as they fail not in any duty of fidelity or honour, leave them, and accept other more profitable employment?

5 Were men as discreet or as grateful as they should be, it were the duty of a master on every occasion

occasion that offered to confer what benefits he could upon his servants. But since experience shows, and I have found it so myself in my own household, that so soon as servants have filled their pockets, or means fail their master to continue those benefits he conferred at first, they leave him in the lurch, the master who attends to his own interest must needs be somewhat near in his dealings with them, and incline more to parsimony than to liberality, working upon them rather by exciting than by satisfying their hopes. But that this method may succeed, it is essential that now and again the master be lavishly bountiful to some one of his servants. This will suffice; because, as it is our nature to be more moved by hope than fear, the example of one whom we see abundantly rewarded cheers and encourages us far more than the sight of many who have not been well treated disquiets us.

6 To pronounce absolutely, categorically, and, as it were, by the card, concerning the things of this world, were a great mistake; for nearly all of them are marked by some singularity or exceptional quality due to difference in their circumstances, making it impossible to refer them

them all to the same standard. These differences and distinctions will not be found set forth in books, but must be taught by discretion.

7 Take heed that in your talk you never needlessly say what, being repeated to others, may cause them offence. For often at unlooked-for times and in unforeseen ways sayings of this sort will do you much hurt. Take good heed, I tell you, for many men, aye, and prudent men too, are guilty of this error, and it is difficult to refrain from it. But if the difficulty be great, so much greater is the gain to him who knows to overcome it.

8 Should necessity or anger move you to speak sharply to any man, at least be careful to say what shall offend him only. For instance, if you would taunt a man, do not vilify his country, his family, or his kinsfolk: since it were great folly, when your purpose is to vex one man only, to incur the resentment of many.

9 Read these maxims often and ponder them well; for though it be easier to understand them and to recognise their truth than to observe them,

them, this too will grow less difficult if you make it your habit to keep them fresh in your memory.

10 Let no one trust so entirely to natural prudence as to persuade himself that it will suffice to guide him without help from experience. For there is no man, however prudent, who has been employed in affairs, but has had cause to know that experience leads us to many results we never could have reached by the force of natural intelligence only.

11 Though many prove thankless, be not therefore deterred from conferring benefits. For not only is beneficence in itself a noble quality, and almost divine, but it may likewise happen that while you practise it you shall meet with some one so grateful that he atones for all the ingratitude of others.

12 The same or similar proverbs, though differently expressed, are found among all nations. And this because these spring from experience or from the observation of things, which are everywhere the same or similar.

13 Whoso would know what are the thoughts of tyrants,

tyrants, let him read Cornelius Tacitus, where he relates the last conversation which the dying Augustus had with Tiberius.

14 Since there is nothing so well worth having as friends, never lose a chance to make them. For men are brought into constant contact with one another, and friends help and foes hinder at times and in places where you least expect it.

15 Like other men, I have sought honours and preferment, and often have obtained them beyond my wishes or hopes. Yet never have I found in them that content which I had figured beforehand in my mind. A strong reason, if we well consider it, why we should disencumber ourselves of vain desires.

16 Greatness and honours are sought after by all, because whatsoever is good or fair in them lies on the surface and is seen at a glance, whereas the anxiety and weariness, the fatigues and risks that attend them, are unseen and hidden. But were the evil inherent in them as patent as the good, we should have no motive to desire them save this only, that the more men

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either fools or knaves, we run excessive risk in making such folk our companions.

20 Nothing is so dangerous to the success of a conspiracy as an over-anxiety to make sure work. For whosoever seeks this, must admit many to his confidence, must take time and wait occasion, all of which precautions give room for the plot being discovered. Hence you may gather how great are the perils of conspiracy, since the measures which in other cases ensure safety here only bring danger. Another reason for this I think may be, that Fortune, who has much to say in these matters, is displeased with him who labours too strenuously to withdraw them from her control.

21 I have repeatedly both said and written that in the year '27 the Medici lost the government of Florence from having in many particulars conformed to the methods of free institutions, and that I feared the people might lose their freedom by conforming to the methods of a despotism. For which two conclusions my reasons are that the rule of the Medici, being odious to the majority of the citizens, if it was to be maintained at all, needed for its support

a

a body of attached adherents, that is to say, of men who, while deriving great advantages from the government, were at the same time aware that should the Medici be driven from Florence, their own overthrow and expulsion must follow. No such support, however, could be looked for under the system followed by the Medici, who, opening a wide door to civil honours and preferments, would concede scarcely any privilege or exceptional favour to their friends, took no step to strengthen themselves by family alliances, and made it their aim to seem impartial to all.

Had they managed every one of these matters in a directly contrary way, they would doubtless have incurred great obloquy, and even then might have failed in laying a partisan foundation for their government. But in seeking to satisfy the whole community, it was impossible for them to succeed. For the desire to revert to the Great Council was so rooted in the hearts of the people, that no kindness, clemency, or indulgence on the part of the Medici could have removed it; while the friends of that family, though content to be governed by them, were yet not so devoted to their government as to be willing to incur danger to maintain it; but hoping by prudent behavour to save themselves,

themselves, as they had done in the year '94, were disposed, if a crisis came, rather to let the flood take its course than to withstand it.

But in Florence a popular government must follow the directly opposite course. For, being held in universal favour, and not being an engine guided by one or by a few to a single definite end, but every day altering its direction by reason of the number and ignorance of those who share in its management, it must to maintain itself preserve the general good-will, and as far as possible avoid divisions among the citizens; for these, unless a stop can be put to them, will open up a way to revolution. In short, it must take its stand upon justice and equality, on which as the security of all will depend, all as a rule will be satisfied. In this way the maintenance of the popular government will rest not upon a few partisans whom the ruler is unable to control, but on numberless friends. To govern upon other principles for any length of time were impossible without passing from the popular to some different form of government; and this would not be to preserve liberty, but to destroy it.

22 How often do we hear it said, had this been done

done or that left undone, this or the other result would have followed. And yet, were it possible to test these opinions, we should find them false.

23 Things future are so deceptive and subject to so many accidents, that even truly wise men commonly make mistakes concerning them; of whose forecasts were any one to take note, especially with regard to particular events, for in their general conclusions they are less apt to be misled, he would find them as much out in their reckoning as others who are thought to be less discerning. Hence to relinquish a present good through apprehension of a future evil is in most instances unwise, unless the evil be very certain and near, or far exceed the good in degree. Otherwise, from a fear which may afterwards turn out groundless, you lose the good that lay within your grasp.

24 There is nothing so fleeting as the memory of benefits received. Count more, therefore, on those who are so circumstanced that they cannot fail you than on those to whom you have done kindness. For often the latter will either forget the benefit rendered them, or think

think it less than in truth it was, or no more than they had a right to expect.

25 Be careful how you do one man a pleasure which must needs occasion equal displeasure in another. For he who is thus slighted will not forget, but will think the offence to himself the greater in that another profits by it; while he who receives the pleasure will either not remember it, or will consider the favour done him less than it really was. So that, assuming other conditions equal, you lose in this way far more than you gain.

26 We should set far greater store on things real and substantial than on ceremonies. And yet it is past belief to how great a degree courteous manners and pleasing words influence every one. And this because all think they deserve to be much esteemed, and in consequence feel hurt if they find you withholding that deference which they are persuaded is their due.

27 Your best and surest safeguard against one whom you suspect is in things being so ordered that he cannot hurt you if he would. For such security

security as depends on the good-will or reasonableness of others is little to be reckoned upon, seeing how little fidelity or goodness we find among men.

28 I know no man who feels deeper disgust than I do at the ambition, avarice, and profligacy of the priesthood, as well because every one of these vices is odious in itself, as because each of them separately and all of them together are utterly abhorrent in men making profession of a life dedicated to God. Besides which, these vices are by nature so contrary to one another, that they can coexist only in some monstrous subject. And yet the position I have filled under several Popes has obliged me for personal reasons to desire their greatness. But for this I should have loved Martin Luther as myself: not that I would be loosed from the laws prescribed by the Christian religion as commonly interpreted and understood, but because I long to see this pack of scoundrels brought within due bounds, that is to say, purged of their vices or stripped of their authority.

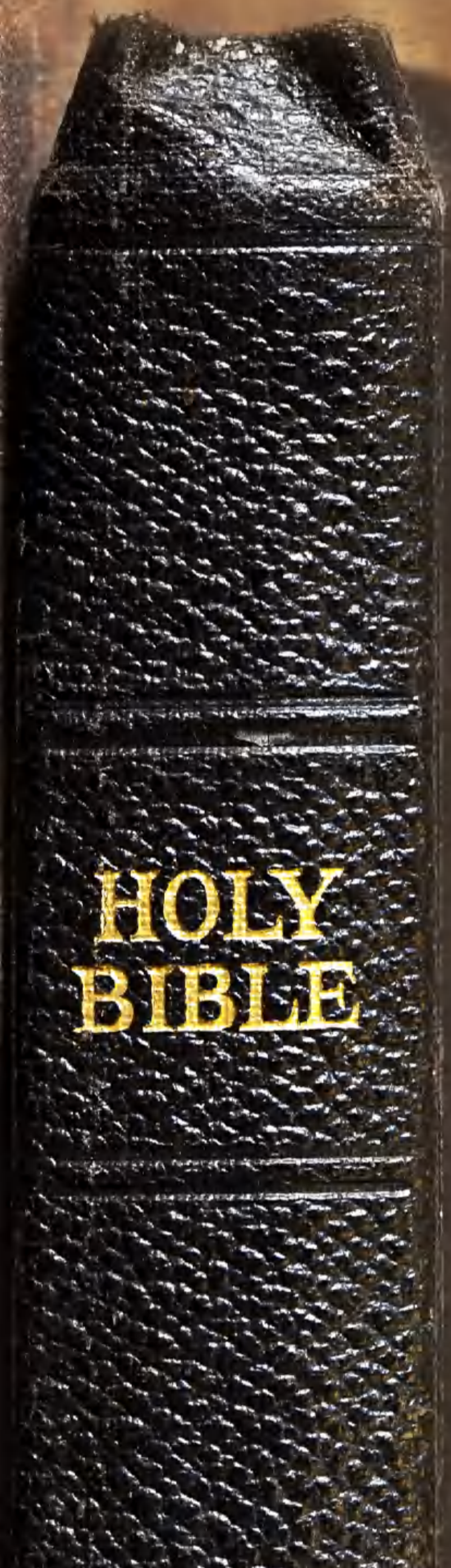
29 I have often said, and still maintain, that it has been a heavier task for the Florentines to acquire

acquire the narrow territories they possess than for the Venetians to gain their far wider dominions. For the Florentines, being placed in a country wherein were many free states not easy to subdue, have had hard work to make, and no less hard to keep their conquests. Besides which, they have in the Church a powerful and never-dying neighbour, who, if sometimes she be in straits, in the end reasserts her rights with unabated vigour. Venice, on the contrary, has spread her victories over countries which, being used to servitude, were stubborn neither to resist nor to rebel; and her neighbours have been secular princes, whose lives and memory soon pass away.

30 Whoso well considers it will scarce deny that in human affairs Fortune rules supreme. For every hour we find the most momentous results springing from such fortuitous causes as it was not within the power of man either to foresee or to escape. And though discernment and vigilance may temper many things, they cannot do so unhelped, but stand always in need of favourable Fortune.

31 Even those who, ascribing all to prudence and

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we find most princes do, who, with this for their goal, and to clear the path that leads to it, put aside conscience, honour, humanity, and all else that is good.

33 There is a proverb that ill-gotten gains are never transmitted to a third inheritor. Were this because their origin is tainted, it might seem that he who first acquired them dishonestly had still less title to enjoy them. My father once told me that St. Augustine explained the reason to be this, that no man is found so depraved as not sometimes to do a good action, and that God, who never leaves good unrewarded or wickedness unpunished, permits him, in requital for whatsoever he has done worthily, to have this enjoyment here, that hereafter, in the world to come, He may chastise him abundantly for his misdeeds; and yet, forasmuch as wealth unjustly gained must be purged, it is not permitted to pass beyond the second heir. To this I answered, that I knew not whether the saying was in itself true, since many instances to the contrary might be shown; but assuming it true, it might be explained on other grounds. For the ordinary vicissitudes in human affairs will of themselves bring poverty where riches have been,

been, and oftener to the heir than to the founder, since the longer the time allowed, the likelier the change to come. Besides, it is the man who acquires a thing that most delights in it, and as he knew how to gain it, knows also how to keep it, and being used to live frugally, does not waste it. But his heirs, not setting the same store on what they find ready to their hand and have had no trouble in getting, and being brought up as wealthy men, and taught none of these arts whereby cometh increase, little wonder if from ill-husbandry or lavish spending they suffer their patrimony to slip through their fingers.

34 All things destined to perish, not by sudden violence, but by a gradual wasting and natural decay, have a far longer term allowed them than at first sight would be supposed. Of this we have example in the hectic patient, who, after his case has been pronounced hopeless, will sometimes linger on, not for days only, but even for weeks and months. So likewise in the city which has had to be reduced by blockade, the unconsumed stores are constantly in excess of what all had reckoned them to be.

35 How wide the difference between theory and practice,

practice, and how many there are who, with abundant knowledge, remember not or know not how to turn it to account! To such men their knowledge is useless, being like a treasure kept shut up in a chest on terms that it shall not be drawn upon.

36 If you would have the good-will of all men, take heed that, when aught is asked of you, you refuse it not point-blank, but answer by generalities. For it may chance that he who makes the request shall not afterwards stand in need of your help, or that circumstances shall arise which will afford you abundant excuse for withholding it. Moreover, many men are so simple, and suffer themselves so readily to be fooled with words, that often, even without doing what you have no mind or power to do, you may contrive by a smooth answer to leave a person contented, who, had you denied him at the first, would have been displeased with you whatever turn events had taken.

37 Always deny boldly what you would not have known, and affirm what you would have believed. For even though there be many proofs and almost

almost a certainty to the contrary, a confident assertion or denial will often perplex and puzzle the brains of him who hears you.

38 It is a much harder matter for the house of the Medici, powerful as it now is and accredited by two Popedoms, to retain its ascendancy in Florence, than it was for Cosimo, though only a private citizen. For he, besides his extraordinary ability, was favoured by the circumstances of the times in which he lived, when his supremacy could be maintained with the support of a few without incurring the displeasure of the many, who as yet were unfamiliar with freedom ; nay, when every feud among the great, and every civil commotion gave opportunity to men of the middle and lower ranks to better their condition. But now that the people have tasted the sweets of the Great Council, we hear no longer of the government being seized on or retained by some four, or six, or ten, or twenty citizens, but of its being held by the entire community, who have this safeguard of their freedom so much at heart, that it were hopeless to turn them from it by any blandishments, or any excellence of government, or any recognition of popular rights to which either

either the Medici or any other powerful citizens could resort.

39 The good qualities of his children made my father be regarded in his day as the most fortunate father in Florence. Yet have I often thought that, taking all into account, the anxiety he had from us was greater than the solace. Think then how it must be with him whose sons are foolish, perverse, or depraved.

40 It is a great matter to be in authority over others; for authority, if it be rightly used, will make you feared beyond your actual resources. Because your subjects, not knowing how far these reach, will be more disposed to give way than to make trial whether or no you can do what you threaten.

41 Were all men wise and good, it were fit that he who exercises rightful authority over others should be gentle rather than severe. But since most men are wanting either in wisdom or goodness, the ruler should build more on severity. And he mistakes who thinks otherwise. I grant, indeed, that a ruler who knew how to blend and temper the one quality with the

the other might bring about an accord and harmony than which nothing could be more pleasing. But skill to effect this is a grace which Heaven concedes to few, perhaps to none.

42 Think less of gaining good-will than of maintaining a good reputation. For losing reputation, you lose good-will, in room whereof comes contempt. But he who maintains his reputation shall never lack friends or favour.

43 I have noticed in my governments, that in respect of many matters I desired to bring about, such as reconciliations, civil accords, and the like, it was advantageous, before moving in them myself, to allow both sides to discuss them and debate over them at great length. For in the end, out of weariness, they would join in entreating me to adjust their differences. Thus appealed to, I could accomplish with credit, and without impeachment of obtrusiveness, what at first I should have attempted in vain.

44 Since a name for goodness will help you in numberless ways, do all you can to seem good. But since false appearances are never lasting, you

you can hardly succeed in seeming good for long, unless you be so in reality. I had this admonition from my father.

45 The same, in praising frugality, was wont to say, "A ducat in your purse gives you more credit than ten spent."

46 In my governments I never took delight in cruelty or in excessive punishments; nor do I think them needed. For save in certain cases where an example has to be made, you may remit a fourth of the penalty and yet be a terror to evil-doers; provided always that no offender is suffered to escape.

47 Learning grafted on a weak intellect, if it does not injure, will certainly not improve it; superadded to natural parts, it makes men perfect and almost divine.

48 States cannot be established or maintained by conforming to the moral law. For if you look to their beginnings, all will be seen to have had their origin in violence; save only the authority of commonwealths within the limits of their own territory, and not beyond. Nor do I except

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wisdom. For if he fail, he perils his life and all he has; while if he succeeds, he secures for himself only a small share of the advantages he expected. But what folly it were to play at a game in which what you may win is as nothing to what you may lose! Besides, and this perhaps is scarcely of less moment, after the change is made you are condemned to endless torment in having always to fear further innovation.

52 We see from experience that nearly all those who help another to become great, grow in time to be little loved by him. The reason is said to be, that he whom they advance, knowing their ability, fears lest some day they should take from him what they have given. Perhaps a still stronger reason is that such persons, thinking themselves to deserve much, look for greater reward than is their due, and are displeased when it is withheld. Hence resentment on the one side and suspicion on the other.

53 When you who were the beginning of my greatness or helped me in my rise, require me to govern as you please or to concede you powers

powers in derogation of my authority, you cancel your original benefit, since you seek to deprive me, either wholly or in part, of the fruits of what you aided me to gain.

54 Let him who has to defend a city make it his chief aim to protract the defence as long as he can. For, as the proverb says, "Time is life," and delay brings with it a thousand opportunities which at the first were neither seen nor hoped for.

55 Spend not on the strength of future gains; for often these either fail you altogether, or else fall short of expectation. Charges, on the contrary, always multiply. It is from neglecting this that so many merchants are brought to bankruptcy. For these, that they may buy goods to be resold at a great profit, draw bills of exchange. But if no profits come, or if they be deferred, the merchant is in danger of being eaten up by his bills, which, with never a rest or respite, keep on running and devouring.

56 Wise economy consists not so much in knowing how to avoid expenses, for often these are not to be avoided, as in knowing how to spend

to

to advantage and get twenty-four *quattrini* for your *grosso*.

57 How much luckier than all the rest of mankind are the astrologers, who, if they tell one truth among a hundred lies, obtain so much credit that even their lies are believed ; whereas other men, if found out in a single lie, are so discredited as not to be believed even when they speak the truth. This is due to the inquisitive nature of men, who, desiring to know the future, and lacking other means of information, will run after any one who promises to enlighten them.

58 Most truly has the wise man said that of things future and contingent we can have no certain knowledge. Turn this over in your mind as you will, the longer you turn it the more you will be satisfied of its truth.

59 I once told Pope Clement, who was wont to be disquieted by every trifling danger, that a good cure for these empty panics was to recall the number of like occasions on which his fears had proved idle. By this I would not be understood as

as urging men never to feel fear, but as dissuading them from living in perpetual alarm.

60 Too subtle an intellect is a gift that brings torment and unhappiness to its possessor, since it only serves to involve him in scruples and anxieties unknown to men of duller perceptions.

61 Temperaments vary, some men being so sanguine that they count with certainty on what they do not yet possess, others so diffident that they hope for nothing they have not already in their grasp. I myself approach nearer to the latter class than to the former, and he who is of this complexion makes fewer mistakes, but leads a more anxious and harassed life.

62 Commonwealths, as a rule, and all men who lack experience, suffer themselves to be more easily moved by a show of gain than by warnings of loss. And yet the contrary should hold, since the passion for keeping is more natural than that for acquiring. The root of the error lies in this, that hope has commonly much more influence over men than fear. Accordingly

Accordingly they are apt not to fear what they should, and to hope what they should not.

63 We see that the old are more avaricious than the young, and yet the reverse should hold, for as they have shorter time to live, less should suffice them. The reason commonly given is that they are more timorous; but this I do not believe. For I see that many of them are more cruel, and, if not in act, at any rate in inclination, more prone to lust than young men, and more disturbed by the thought of death. I think the true reason is that the longer a man lives, the more his habits grow confirmed, and the closer he applies himself to the things of this world, and so comes to love them more, and to be more moved by them.

64 Before the year 1494 wars were protracted, battles bloodless, the methods followed in besieging towns slow and uncertain; and although artillery was already in use, it was managed with such want of skill that it caused little hurt. Hence it came that the ruler of a state could hardly be dispossessed. But the French, on their invasion of Italy, infused so much liveliness into our wars, that up to the

year

year 1521, whenever the open country was lost the state was lost with it. Signor Prospero Colonna, by his successful defence of Milan, was the first to show how an attacking army might be withstood; after which lesson the rulers of states regained the same security against assailants that they had enjoyed before the year 1494, but for other reasons; for before that time their security arose from men not having mastered the methods of attack, whereas now it results from their proficiency in the arts of defence.

65 Whosoever first gave the name *impedimenta* to the baggage of an army, could not have named it better. Nor is it ill said that such and such a thing is as hard as to shift a camp. For it is an almost endless business to get together in a camp all that is needed for moving it.

66 Distrust those who talk loudly of liberty; for nearly all of them, aye all of them without exception, have their own ends to serve. And often we are shown by experience, which is our surest guide, that these fellows, when they think they can push their fortunes better under

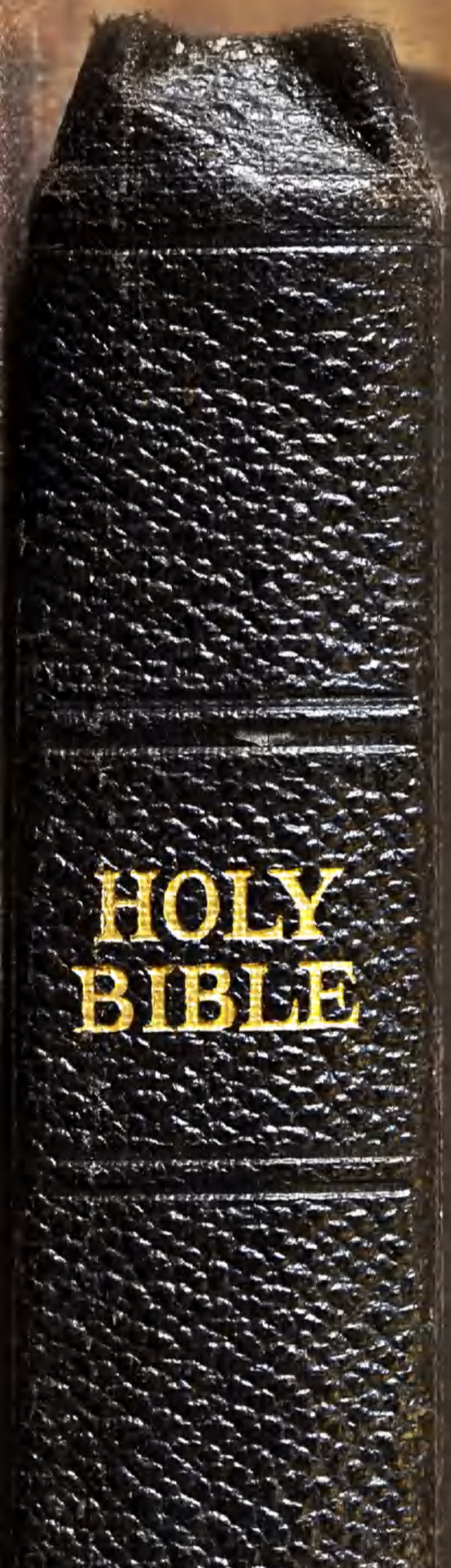
under an absolute government, rush to it post-haste.

67 There is no post or employment in the world wherein greater capacity is needed than in the command of an army, as well from the importance of the charge itself, as because it requires you to provide and arrange for an endless variety of contingencies. He, therefore, who holds such a command should be able to see a long way before him, and know at once how to repair mishaps.

68 To be neutral in the wars waged by others is a wise course for him who is in himself so strong that whichever side prevails he has no cause for fear. For he keeps clear of trouble himself, and may hope to profit from the troubles of his neighbours. But unless you be in this position, to be neutral is an indiscreet and hurtful course, leaving you a prey alike to the victor and the vanquished. And the most fatal of all neutralities is that which results not from choice, but from irresolution; that is to say, when, without making up your mind whether to take a side or no, you so behave as to give no content even to him by whom at the moment your mere assur-

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grow up, or any other like mutation going on, concerning which it is sometimes possible beforehand to form an approximate judgment, be careful that you do not deceive yourself in your estimate of time. For the march of events, both from their own nature and from the various obstacles that stand in their way, is far slower than is commonly supposed, and to be mistaken on this head may do you much harm. Be very careful, I say, for this is ground on which men often stumble. What I speak of happens also in matters private and personal, but is far more frequent in such as are of public and general concern; for in these the material mass is greater, its progress slower, and subject to a greater variety of accidents.

72 There is nothing in life that a man should more desire, or that brings him greater glory, than to see his enemy prostrate in the dust and at his mercy. But this glory is doubled by him who uses the occasion well, that is to say, who shows mercy and is content with having had the victory.

73 Neither Alexander the Great, nor Cæsar, nor any of the other great commanders who have been

been renowned for their clemency, ever used it where they knew it was likely to lessen or endanger the effect of their victories (for indeed to have done so had been almost madness), but only in cases wherein its exercise, taking nothing from their safety, added largely to their fame.

74 Revenge springs not always from hatred or from a cruel disposition, but is sometimes necessary, to the end that others may be taught by example to beware how they injure us. Nor is it inconsistent that a man should revenge himself, and yet harbour no rancour against him whom he chastises.

75 Pope Leo told me that his father, Lorenzo de' Medici, would often say, "Be sure that he who speaks evil of us does not wish us well."

76 Whatsoever has been in the past or is now will repeat itself in the future; but the names and surfaces of things will be so altered, that he who has not a quick eye will not recognise them, or know to guide himself accordingly, or to form a judgment on what he sees.

77 When ambassador in Spain, I observed that whenever

whenever the Catholic King, Don Ferdinand of Aragon, a most prudent and powerful prince, was minded to engage in any new enterprise, he would so contrive matters that before his intention was published the whole court and people were crying out and urging upon him that this was a thing he ought to do. The King disclosing his design at the moment it was thus desired and called for, it was received by his subjects and throughout his dominions with incredible support and favour.

78 The very same things which, when under-taken at the proper moment, readily succeed, and, so to speak, accomplish themselves, will, if attempted prematurely, not merely fail then, but will often also lose their aptitude for succeeding at their own time. Accordingly, you are not to rush hastily on any enterprise, nor to precipitate events, but to await their season and maturity.

79 Unless rightly understood, the proverb which bids the wise man trust to time might be dangerous. For when a coveted opportunity offers, he who fails to use it then may afterwards look for it in vain. And for many things despatch

despatch both in resolving and executing is essential. But when you are surrounded by difficulties and embarrassments, you must procrastinate and gain what time you can; for often in this way you either extricate yourself from your troubles, or at least learn to understand them better. Putting this meaning on the proverb, it is always a wholesome one; but interpreted otherwise, it might frequently prove hurtful.

80 Happy they to whom the same opportunity offers itself twice. For even a wise man may neglect or misuse a first occasion; but he must indeed be a fool who fails to recognise and profit by a second.

81 Never count so surely on the happening of any event, however certain it may seem, as not, when it can be done without crossing your plans, to keep something in reserve to be used in case the contrary of what you expect should come to pass. For things often turn out so differently from what was looked for, that it is only prudent to act in this way.

82 Small and almost imperceptible beginnings are

are often the occasion of great disasters or of great prosperity. The highest prudence therefore lies in noting and weighing well all circumstances, even the most trifling.

83 Once I thought that what I could not apprehend at a glance would never grow clear to me afterwards. But experience has shown me the contrary to be the case, both as regards myself and others. For the longer and more closely things are considered, the better are they understood and carried out.

84 If you would be employed in affairs, never allow yourself to be withdrawn from your hold on them, for you will not be able to recover it at your pleasure. While you continue to retain your hold, one employment will come to you after another, without your using any special diligence or address to get them.

85 Not only does one man's fortune differ from another's, but the same man's fortune will also differ. For the same man will be lucky in one thing, unlucky in something else. I myself have been fortunate in respect of those gains which come without capital, and simply through personal

personal qualities. In all others I have been unfortunate. And things I have got with difficulty by seeking, when I have not sought them have fallen into my hands.

86 Let him who is employed in important affairs and looks to make his way in the world, conceal mishaps and magnify successes. This is a kind of quackery and abhorrent to my nature. But because under our present rulers advancement depends more on the opinion of men than on realities, it profits that things be thought to be going well with you, and hurts if the contrary be believed.

87 From friends and kinsmen you draw advantages which neither you nor they are conscious of, far in excess of those recognised as actually coming from them. For occasions on which you have to resort to them for aid are rare in comparison with the benefits daily afforded you under the belief that you can have their support when you will.

88 A prince, and every one else who is employed on state affairs, ought not only to keep secret things which it is desirable should not be known, but

but should accustom himself and his ministers to be silent on all matters, even the most trifling and insignificant, which he would not have made public. For your subjects and those about you being thus kept in the dark as to your intentions, abide in suspense and wonder, and your slightest movements and gestures are watched.

89 When it comes from a doubtful source, I am slow to believe news that in itself seems likely. For what men's minds are already prepared to accept as true may easily be feigned, whereas things in themselves improbable and unlooked for are not so often invented. Accordingly, when I hear unlikely news, I am less apt to discredit it.

90 They who depend on the favour of a prince will hang upon his looks and note his slightest movements and gestures, that they may fly to anticipate his wishes. This often does them much harm. It is wiser to keep a cool head, and, without allowing yourself to be disturbed by trifles, to come forward only when substantial services are to be rendered.

91 I can hardly reconcile it with God's justice that

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yourself as much as you can before his eyes. For affairs are constantly turning up, which, if reminded of you by your presence, the prince will intrust to you, but which, were he not to see you, he would commit to another.

95 Foolhardy we may call the man who rushes blindly into dangers without discerning their true character. Him we name brave who recognising dangers fears them no more than he should.

96 It is an old saying that all wise men are timid, and for this reason, that perceiving all dangers, they have more cause to be afraid. I believe the saying to be false, since he is not to be reckoned a wise man who thinks more of a danger than he should. I would rather call him wise who rightly estimates the degree of the danger and fears it no more than he ought. It is the brave man, therefore, rather than the timid who is to be accounted wise. And assuming both to be equally discerning, the distinction between the two lies in this, that the timid man takes into account all the dangers which he knows may possibly arise, and always anticipates the worst; whereas

the

the other, though he too discerns all dangers, yet reflecting how many of them may be escaped by proper precautions, and how many come to nothing of themselves, does not suffer himself to be dismayed, but goes boldly forward in the hope and confidence that everything will not happen that might.

97 When Pope Clement was created, the Marquis of Pescara said to me that this was perhaps the only occasion on which he had seen what all men desired come to pass. The explanation may be that it is the few and not the many who give the affairs of this world their impulse, and that the ends of the few are always different from those of the many, and so lead to other results than those the many desire.

98 Though a prudent tyrant will look with favour on those wise men who are timid, he will not feel ill-disposed to those who are brave if he know them to be of a tranquil temper. For men of this sort he may reasonably hope to content. It is the bold and restless that beyond all others displease him, since, as he can never count on satisfying them, he has to bethink him how he may get them out of his way.

By

99 By a prudent tyrant, unless he looked on me as his enemy, I had sooner be taken for a bold and restless man than for a timid. The former he will seek to conciliate; with the latter he feels himself secure.

100 It is safer to stand fairly well with a tyrant than to share his closest intimacy. For living with him on this footing, if you be generally esteemed, you not only profit by his greatness, sometimes in a larger measure than those others of whom he feels himself more secure, but may also hope to save yourself in the event of his downfall.

101 To protect yourself against a brutal and bloodthirsty tyrant, no rule or remedy can be prescribed that will anything avail you, except, as recommended in the case of the plague, to flee from him as fast and as far as you can.

102 The captain who is besieged, if he expect succour, will always represent his necessities as much greater than in truth they are. But when he does not look to be relieved, having then no way left him but to tire out his opponent, and with this object to lower his hopes, he will always

always disguise his distress and make the least of it.

103 A tyrant will do all he can to read the secrets of your heart, plying you with civilities, conversing much with you himself, and having you watched by others, who at his orders wind themselves into your confidence. From all which snares it is not easy for you to escape. Wherefore, if you would not have your thoughts known, see that you most carefully guard against aught that might tend to betray them; using the same address to this end as the tyrant to penetrate them.

104 Frank sincerity is a quality much extolled among men and pleasing to every one, while simulation, on the contrary, is detested and condemned. Yet for a man's self, simulation is of the two by far the more useful; sincerity tending rather to the interest of others. But since it cannot be denied that it is not a fine thing to deceive, I would commend him whose conduct is as a rule open and straightforward, and who uses simulation only in matters of the gravest importance and such as very seldom occur; for in this way he will gain a name for honesty and sincerity,

sincerity, and with it the advantages attaching to these qualities. At the same time, when, in any extreme emergency, he resorts to simulation, he will draw all the greater advantage from it, because from his reputation for plain dealing his artifice will blind men more.

105 Even after a man has got a name for feigning and dissembling, you shall find that his frauds sometimes succeed. This seems a strange thing to say, and yet is undeniable; and I myself remember that the Catholic King, who beyond all other men had a reputation of this sort, when he had any end to accomplish never failed in finding dupes. This must be due either to the simplicity of men or to their greed. For greedy men believe easily whatsoever they desire, and simple men know not when they are deceived.

106 Nothing in our republican way of living gives us more trouble than to bestow our daughters suitably in marriage. And this because all men having a higher opinion of themselves than others entertain of them, think at first that they can secure alliances in quarters where they are not to be had. Accordingly, I have often seen

seen fathers decline proposals which, after many fruitless attempts in other directions, they would gladly have accepted. You must, therefore, measure fairly your own position with that of others, and not let yourself be carried away by an undue estimate of your own importance. Of this I am convinced; but am not so sure that I should know to put what I say into practice, or avoid the common error of valuing myself more than I ought. This warning, however, is not meant to make us think so meanly of ourselves, that, like Francesco Vettori, we should give our daughters away to the first who asks for them.

107 To be born a citizen of a dependent state is not a thing to be desired. But if such is to be your fate, it is better to be the dependent of a prince than of a commonwealth. For a commonwealth will abase all who are in subjection to it, nor permit any save its own citizens to share its greatness. But a prince has a wider sympathy for all his subjects, and looks on them all with an equal eye. So that every man may hope to be employed and advanced by him.

108 There is no man so prudent as not sometimes to

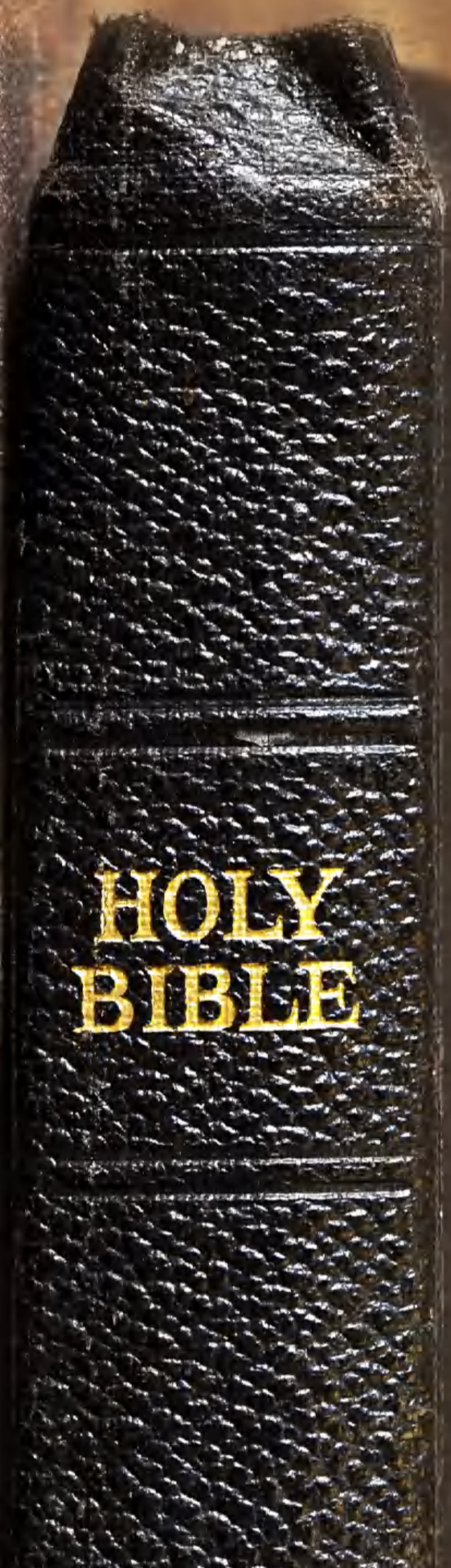
to make mistakes. Good fortune lies in our making fewer than others do, or in matters of less moment.

109 It is not the fruition of free institutions, nor the end they were meant to serve, that every man should govern (for none ought to govern save such as are fit and worthy), but that good laws and ordinances be observed; which is better secured under a commonwealth than under the rule of one or of a few. What brings so much trouble on our city is that men are not content to be free and secure, but are never at rest unless they themselves govern.

110 What a mistake is theirs who cite on all occasions the example of the Romans! To do as the Romans did, we would need to have a city circumstanced like theirs. To attempt it with means so inferior as ours is to require of the ass the fleetness of the horse.

111 The vulgar blame the lawyers because they differ in their opinions, not reflecting that this proceeds from no defect in the men, but from the nature of the thing. For since it is impossible to bring every particular case under general

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meant that, after considering all the particulars and circumstances of the case, he is to decide as equity and conscience dictate. Wherefore, although the judge cannot be called to account for his decisions before any human tribunal, he will have to stand before the judgment-seat of God, who will pronounce whether he has determined righteously or no.

114 In narrating current events, some writers will enter on a discussion of what is likely to happen hereafter; and such forecasts, when made by men who are well informed, seem very admirable to him who reads them. Nevertheless they are extremely misleading. For as these reasonings, like the links of a chain, depend one upon another, if any one of them fail, all the others deduced from it fall to the ground, and the most trifling variation in the circumstances suffices to cause an error in the conclusion. It is impossible, therefore, to form a judgment as to the course of events while they are yet remote; our opinions must be formed and modified from day to day.

115 In a note-book written before the year 1457, I find it recorded as having been said by a wise citizen

citizen that Florence must either destroy the *Monte* or be destroyed by it. I can well believe that unless our city restrict the credit of the *Monte*, it may so extend its operations that it will be impossible to control it. But the thing has gone on long without producing the anticipated disorder. In a word, the movement has been slower than perhaps he who made the prophecy foresaw.

116 Those who govern states must not be daunted by seeming dangers, however great, near, and imminent they look. For the Devil, as the proverb says, is never so black as he is painted. Many things may come about that will cause dangers to disappear of themselves; and even when they do arrive, some unthought of remedy or alleviation will be found to accompany them. This is a hint to which you should give heed; for every day you will have occasion to act upon it.

117 It is most misleading to judge by examples; for unless these be in all respects parallel, they are of no force, the least diversity in the circumstances giving rise to the widest divergence in the conclusions. To discern these minute differences requires a just and clear eye.

With

118 With him who greatly esteems fame, since he cares not for cost, fatigue, or danger, everything succeeds. I have found this in my own case, and therefore can say and write it boldly. Dead and empty are the pursuits of those who are not pushed forward by this fiery spur.

119 The falsification of documents is seldom contrived from the first, but is introduced afterwards in the course of time, as occasion or necessity may suggest. To secure yourself against this, it is a wise precaution that, so soon as any written instrument is executed, you have an authentic copy of it made, to be retained in your own keeping.

120 Most of the violent deeds that take place in divided cities have their origin in distrust. For one man, fearing another's treachery, is forced to forestall him. Accordingly, he who governs in such a city should seek to anticipate, and to remove all cause for distrusting him.

121 Attempt no innovation in the government of your city, in the hope that you will be seconded by the people. For this were a dangerous foundation to build on. Either they lack courage

courage to stand by you, or else, as often happens, they cherish views very different from what you imagine. Witness the case of Brutus and Cassius, who, after the murder of Cæsar, so far from receiving from the people the support they had reckoned on, were constrained through fear of them to seek refuge in the Capitol.

122 See how completely men deceive themselves! Every one regards those sins which he does not himself commit as heinous, and those he does commit as trivial. So that good and evil are more often measured by this rule than by reflection on the nature and tendencies of our actions.

123 I am inclined to think that in all ages men have taken many things for miracles which in truth were far enough from being so. This, at least, is most certain, that every religion has had miracles of its own. Hence it follows that a miracle is but feeble testimony to the truth of one faith over that of another. Miracles, perhaps, do well display the power of God; yet not more of the God of the Christian than of the gods of the gentiles: so that it may not be

amiss

amiss to say of them, and of prophecies too, that they are secrets of Nature to the depths of which the mind of man cannot reach.

124 I note that in every country, and almost in every city, worship is offered at certain shrines with exactly the same effect. In Florence, our Lady of Impruneta brings rain or fair weather; in other places, I have seen other Virgins and Saints do the same—a manifest proof that God's grace succours all. And yet, perhaps, these effects are rather the results of men's faith than due to the agencies generally credited with them.

125 Philosophers, theologians, and all others who write of things unseen and supernatural, give utterance to a thousand follies. For the fact is that men are in the dark as to such matters, and the search into them has served and serves rather to exercise the intellect than to discover truth.

126 It were to be wished that we could do things, or cause them to be done, exactly to our minds, and so that they should be free from the least flaw or defect. But since this were hard of accomplishment,

accomplishment, it is a mistake to spend much time in over-refining; for opportunities will often escape you while you labour to attain perfection. And even when you think you have succeeded in your efforts, you see afterwards that you have been deceived; for such is the nature of the things of this world, that it is scarce possible to find anything which has not somewhere imperfection or blemish. We must therefore be content to take things as they are, and to reckon the least evil as a good.

127 Tidings have often been brought me in time of war which seemed to show that our affairs were desperate, but which have been immediately followed by others of a more reassuring character; or sometimes the good tidings would come first and the bad after; and these contrary rumours would be frequently renewed. A lesson to a wise captain not to be too easily depressed or elated.

128 In affairs of state you are not so much to consider what a prince ought in reason to do, as what, having regard to his disposition and previous behavour, it is likely that he will do. For princes often do, not what they ought, but what

what they please, or what their nature prompts them to; and he who expects them to be guided by any different rule will find himself mightily mistaken.

129 To leave undone what, if done, would be a crime or an injustice, is not to be spoken of as a good action or a benefit. For between benefits and wrongs, between actions that are to be praised and those that are to be condemned, there lies a middle course in refraining from hurt or offence. Wherefore, let no man boast that he has not said this or done that; for true merit mostly lies in being able to affirm, I did it, or I said it.

130 Beyond all others let a prince beware of those whose nature it is never to be satisfied. For no load of benefits he may heap upon them will ever secure him against their ingratitude.

131 There is a wide difference between having your subjects discontented and having them desperate. The discontented man, however much he may be disposed to injure you, will not lightly expose himself to danger, but will await opportunities which perhaps may never come.

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they know you for their enemy. I have frequently been obliged to seek assistance from persons against whom I felt great bitterness; and they, believing the contrary, or at any rate not being aware of my dislike, have served me with the utmost alacrity.

134 All men are by nature more inclined to good than to evil; nor is there any one who, when other considerations do not move him to the contrary, would not more willingly do you a benefit than an injury. But human nature is so frail, and open to so many temptations, that men easily allow themselves to deviate from their natural goodness. For which reason wise lawgivers have had recourse to rewards and punishments. And this is merely an endeavour to keep men fixed in their natural inclinations by the help of hope and fear.

135 If any one be found disposed by nature to do evil rather than good, call him not a man, but rather a beast or monster; since he lacks an instinct which by nature no man is without.

136 The fool will sometimes accomplish greater things than the wise man. For the latter, unless otherwise

otherwise constrained, will trust much to reason and little to fortune, while the other trusts much to fortune and little to reason. But the things seconded by fortune have often a success past belief. The wise men of Florence would have yielded to the present storm, but the fools being resolved, contrary to all reason, to withstand it, have up to this time succeeded in doing what none could have believed it in any way possible for our city to do; and this is what is meant by the proverb, *Audaces fortuna juvat.*

137 Were the evils following from bad government to become apparent in every particular case, he that knew not how to govern would either try to learn, or would leave the task of governing to others who understood it better. The mischief is that men, and more especially the common sort, not recognising, by reason of their ignorance, the cause of disorders, do not refer these to their true source; and not perceiving how much harm results from being governed by those who know not how to govern, persist in the error of themselves doing what they do not understand, or of suffering themselves to be governed by incompetent men; and hence the overthrow of states is often brought about.

Neither

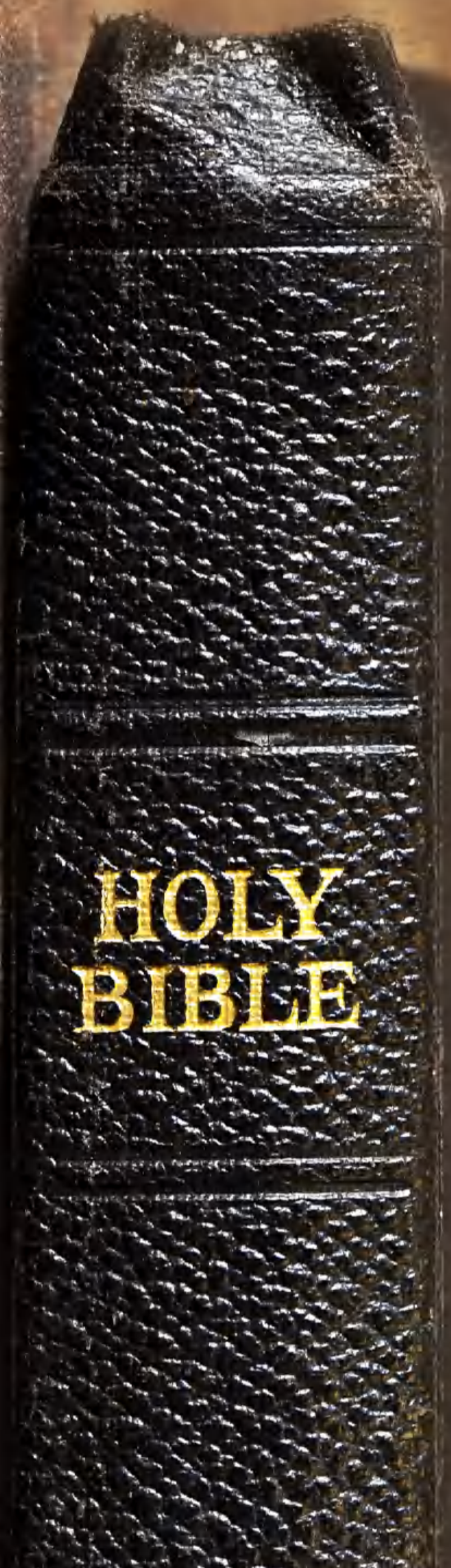
138 Neither wise men nor fools can in the end escape what has to be; so that nothing I ever read seems to me more true than the saying of Seneca, *Ducunt volentes fata, nolentes trahunt.*

139 Cities, like men, must perish: there is, however, this difference. Men perish even when they have committed no irregularities, because their material is perishable. Cities perish from no defect in their material, which constantly renews itself, but either from ill-fortune or from bad government, that is to say, the unwise methods of their rulers. Ruin coming from mere ill-fortune is extremely rare; for a city being a vigorous body and of great capacity for resistance, extraordinary and overwhelming violence must needs be employed for its destruction. Accordingly it is almost always the errors of those who govern that occasion the downfall of cities. And were a city to be always well governed, it might last for ever; or at any rate have a life out of all proportion longer than any city has yet had.

140 To speak of the people is in truth to speak of a beast, mad, mistaken, perplexed, without taste, discernment, or stability.

No

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single exception, are at fault in omitting to relate many things known in their times, as being matters of universal notoriety. Whence it happens that in the histories of the Greeks, the Romans, and all other nations we are at the present day in the dark concerning many matters of fact. For instance, as to the authority and distinctions of their magistrates, their systems of government, their methods of warfare, the size of their towns, and many like matters, which being very well known at the date they wrote, they, in consequence, passed over. But had they reflected that in the course of time cities disappear and the memory of things is lost, and that histories are written for no other reason than that these may be perpetuated, they would have been more careful to write in such a way that men born in a distant age should have every event as much before their eyes as those in whose presence they happened; for this is the true object of history.

144 Word coming when I was in Spain that the Venetians had leagued with the King of France against the Catholic King, Almazano the Spanish Secretary said to me, We have a proverb in Castile that the rope breaks at the point where it

it is weakest. His meaning was, I take it that in such alliances the weakest always fares worst. For men do not govern themselves by considerations of what is right or fit, but all seeking their own advantage, agree to make him suffer, whom, as being the feeblest among them, they least fear. Whosoever, therefore, has to negotiate with others more powerful than himself should keep this proverb in mind; for every hour will prove its truth.

145 Though human life be short, rest assured that he will find it long enough who knows to make wise use of his time, and does not unprofitably waste it. For man's nature fits him for great efforts, and any one who is diligent and resolute will get through an incredible amount of work.

146 It is a great misfortune to be so situated that you cannot secure a good without first accepting an evil.

147 He mistakes who thinks the success of an enterprise to depend on whether it be just or no. For every day we have proof to the contrary, and that it is not the justice of a cause,

cause, but prudence, strength, and good fortune that give the victory. It is doubtless true that in him who has right on his side there is often bred a firm confidence, founded on the belief that God will favour the righteous cause, which makes him bold and stubborn, and that from this boldness and stubbornness victories do sometimes follow. In this way it may now and then indirectly help you that your cause is just. But it is a mistake to suppose that directly any such effect is produced.

148 He that is in too great haste to bring a war to a conclusion will often prolong it; for the failure to await the necessary supplies and the fitting season for the enterprise makes that difficult which otherwise had been easy; and thus for every single day it was thought to gain by despatch, more than a month is frequently lost; not to mention that this may be the cause of further disaster.

149 In wars whoso would be sparing will spend most, since there is nothing that demands a larger or more unstinted outlay. The more complete your preparations are, the sooner will the war be over; and as the failure to spend money

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152 Take heed how you involve yourself in new enterprises or engagements; for once in, you are forced to go on. Whence it results that men are often found labouring through tasks which being embarked in they cannot withdraw from, though had they foreseen a tenth part of their difficulty they would have gone a thousand miles to avoid them. This rule holds most of all in feuds, factions, and wars, before taking part in which, or in anything of a like nature, no amount of careful and cautious consideration will be excessive.

153 It is seen that ambassadors often take the part of the prince to whose court they are sent; and this makes them be suspected either of having received bribes, or of looking for them, or at least of having been won over by the civilities and attentions paid them. Yet it may also be that having the affairs of the prince with whom they are living constantly before their eyes, and their attention less drawn to any others, these seem to them of more than their true importance. But as this reason does not operate with the prince who sends them, by whom all the circumstances needing to be considered are equally known, he speedily sees his minister

minister to be at fault, and often ascribes to dishonesty what in truth results from want of judgment. Let him who goes as an ambassador note this well, for it is a matter of much importance.

154 Numberless are the secrets of princes, and endless the matters they have to take into account; wherefore it were rashness to judge hastily of their actions. For often it happens that what you suppose a prince to have done for one reason, has in fact been done for another; and what seems to you done at random and imprudently, has been done designedly and with consummate wisdom.

155 It is said that he who is not acquainted with all particulars cannot form a true judgment. And yet you shall often see a man who is wanting in discernment judge better when he has only a general acquaintance with a subject, than when all the particulars are before him. For on a general view a right conclusion will frequently occur to him; whereas on hearing particulars he gets bewildered.

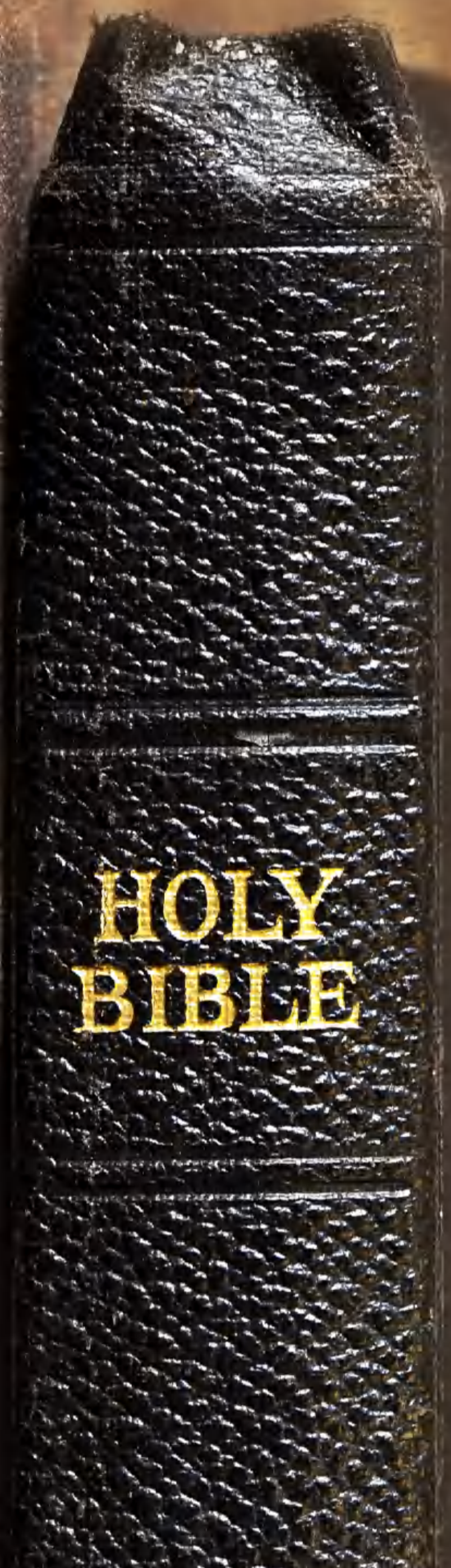
156 By nature I am extremely firm and settled in my

my resolutions. And yet, after deciding on some important step, I am often visited with a kind of repentance for the course I have taken. Not that I believe that had I to resolve again I would resolve differently, but because before I resolved I had the difficulties on both sides more under my eyes; whereas after my resolution is formed, and I no longer fear the difficulties I put to flight in forming it, those alone present themselves against which I have still to combat, which, looked at apart, seem far greater than they would have appeared if contrasted with the others. To free myself from this disquietude, I have carefully to recall to my mind those other difficulties which I had previously set aside.

157 It is not desirable to have earned for oneself a name for being suspicious and distrustful. And yet men are so false and crafty, resort to so many deep and ambiguous devices, are so keen for their own interests and so careless of those of others, that we can hardly err in believing little and distrusting much.

158 The advantages you draw from having gained a good name and reputation are seen every hour; and yet are as nothing compared with those

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thinking of death; since, were we to think of it, the world would brim over with sloth and indolence.

161 When I consider to what risks and perils of sickness, accident, violence, and numberless other ills, the life of man is open, and call to mind how many circumstances must combine throughout the year to ensure a good harvest, nothing fills me with more wonder than that any man should live to be old, or any year be fruitful.

162 Both in wars and in many other affairs of moment I have often seen preparations neglected under an impression that they were too late; and yet it has been seen afterwards that they would have been in time, and that the omission to make them has occasioned much loss. This results from the movement of things being much slower than we think for; so that often what you imagined would be over in one month, is not ended in three or four. This is an important reflection, and one whereof to take heed.

163 How true the saying of the ancients that *Place shows a man!* For nothing so clearly reveals a man's qualities as to invest him with place

place and power. How many there are who talk well, yet know not how to act! How many in the street or in the market-place seem capable men, who when employed are discovered to be shadows!

164 Prosperity is often our worst enemy, making us vicious, frivolous, and insolent; so that to bear it well is a better test of a man than to bear adversity.

165 It might seem from one point of view that a prince or master should know better than any one else the character of his subjects or servants, since their actions and behaviour must constantly come under his notice. But from another point of view the contrary holds; for before others a servant will show himself more openly, while with his master he will use all craft and care to cloak his nature and thoughts.

166 Do not suppose that he who acts on the offensive—the besieger of a city for instance—can foresee all the methods of defence to which his adversary may resort. To the mind of a skilful assailant all the ordinary remedies of a

a defender will present themselves; but to the defender himself the peril and extremity to which he is reduced will suggest extraordinary remedies, such as another not stimulated by the same necessity would never think of.

167 There is nothing, I think, in the world worse than levity. For light men are the ready tools of any cause, be it ever so bad, dangerous, or disastrous. Flee them, therefore, as you would fire.

168 What matters it to me that he who injures me acts through ignorance and not from ill-will? Nay, the injuries of the ignorant are often the worst. For ill-will has definite ends, and works by its own rules, and consequently does not always inflict the hurt it might. But ignorance having neither rule, aim, or measure, behaves like the madman and deals its blows in the dark.

169 Take it for certain that, whether you live under a commonwealth, under an oligarchy, or under a sole prince, it is impossible for you to have everything your own way. Wherefore, if

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carried; and the worth of a prince was seen in the men he sent to represent him abroad. We may accordingly infer what kind of a government we have in Florence when at one and the same moment we see employed as her ambassadors Carducci in France, Gualterotto in Venice, Messer Bardi in Siena, and Messer Galeotto Giugni in Ferrara!

172 Not for their own private advantage were princes ordained, but for the common welfare; and the revenues and royalties assigned them were meant to be used in the defence of their subjects and of their dominions. Hence it is that parsimony is more odious in a prince than in a private man. For the prince who accumulates wealth unduly, appropriates to himself that whereof he never was made absolute master, but only steward and administrator in the interest of many.

173 Prodigality in a prince is more hateful and pernicious than parsimony, since, to be prodigal, the prince must take from many; and to take from your subjects is more hurtful than not to give. And yet it would seem that subjects are better pleased with a prodigal than with a parsimonious

simonious prince. The reason is, that although those to whom the prodigal gives are few as compared with those from whom he takes, of whom there must needs be many, nevertheless, as I have said before, hope has so much more influence over men than fear, that they sooner look to be of the few to whom is given than of the many from whom is taken.

174 Do all you can to stand well with princes and with those in authority. For although you be innocent of offence, peaceful and regular in your life, and in no way disposed to give trouble, things may occur at any moment which will necessarily bring you under the arm of the ruler. Moreover, the mere belief that you are not acceptable to the powers that be will do you harm in an infinity of ways.

175 A ruler or magistrate should take all possible heed not to display hostility to any man, or seem to seek vengeance for injuries done to himself. For he incurs grave blame who employs the public arm to redress his private wrong. Let him be patient, therefore, and bide his time. For occasion must needs come when he may effect his end with justification and without impeachment of rancour.

Pray

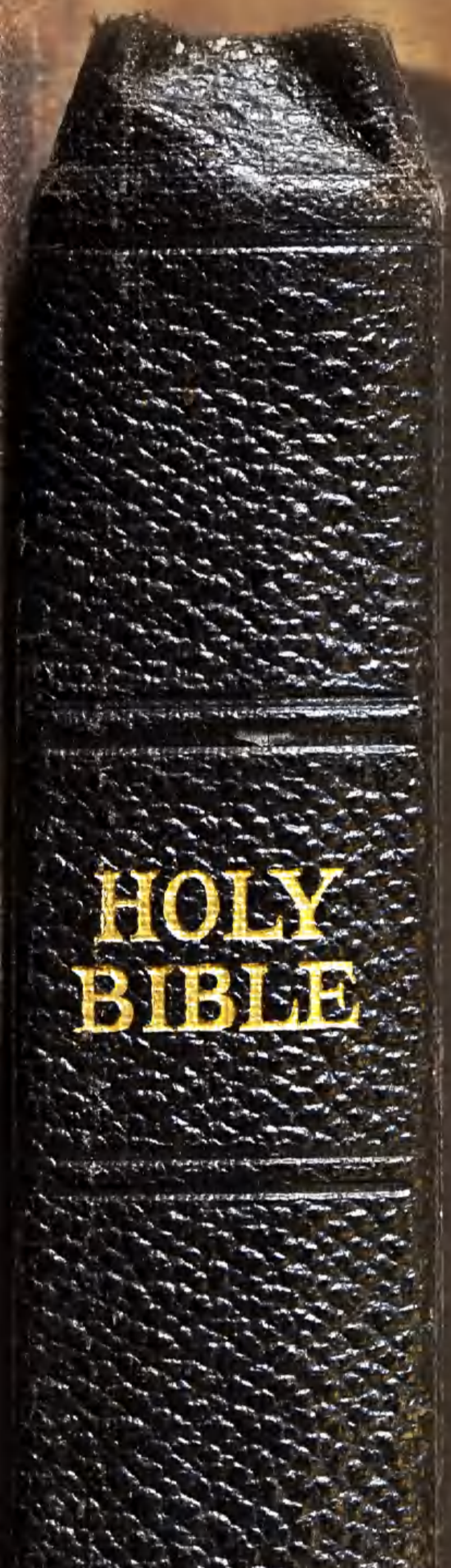
176 Pray God that you be always found on the winning side; for so you get credit even for things in which you had no part; whereas he who stands with the losers has endless offences imputed to him whereof he is wholly guiltless.

177 In Florence, by reason of the poor spirit of our citizens, it commonly happens that when a man has committed some violent offence against the state, no attempt is made to punish him, but all efforts are used to let him escape scot-free, on his engaging to disarm and not to renew his misconduct. These are not ways to restrain the insolent, but to change lambs into lions.

178 Trades and industries are at their best when they are not yet generally understood to be profitable. When seen by all to be so, they fall off; because, from many resorting to them, the competition prevents them from being any longer lucrative. In all things it profits to be up betimes.

179 In my youth I made light of such superficial accomplishments as dancing, singing, and playing; nay, even of writing a fair hand, knowing how to ride, how to dress becomingly, and all other

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first on the footing that difficulties will have to be encountered.

181 For eleven successive years I was engaged in governing for the Church, and so much to the satisfaction both of my employers and of those over whom I ruled, that had it not been for the events which took place in Rome and Florence in the year 1527, I might have continued to govern for a great while longer. During all this time I found that nothing strengthened me so much in my position as to seem indifferent whether I was employed or no. For on this footing, without fear or favour, I did whatever was suitable to the office I held; and this gave me such a reputation as of itself helped me more, and more honourably, than any blandishments, interest, or address I could have used.

182 I have noticed that men of great sagacity, when they have to resolve on any business of moment, almost invariably fall to distinguishing the various courses the thing may take, and after considering two or three probable contingencies, form their final resolve on the footing that some one of these will happen. Be

Be warned that this is a dangerous method to follow ; for often, and indeed almost always, some other contingency, not taken into account in your deliberations and not met by your resolve, will turn up. Accordingly, it is your safer plan, in resolving, to assume that things you think unlikely may well come about, and never where you can help it to limit the scope of your deliberations.

183 A wise captain, if not constrained by necessity, will never bring his army into battle unless he see that it will fight to great advantage ; for the issue is too much in the hands of Fortune, and defeat too serious a risk.

184 I would not have men shut out from ordinary matters of talk, nor from a pleasant and loving familiarity in their intercourse with one another. But I maintain it to be a prudent course not to speak of your own private affairs unless obliged, and then to say no more about them than is needed for the argument or object you have in hand, keeping everything else to yourself. To do otherwise may be more agreeable, but it is more useful to do this.

185 Men always praise lavish spending in others, and

and generosity and magnificence in their mode of living. Yet most men in their own case pursue a contrary course. You should therefore measure your outlay by your means, and by the advantage you may reasonably and honourably draw from it; never allowing yourself to be led into extravagance by the opinions and talk of the vulgar, or by the hope to gain credit and approval from those who do not sincerely commend what they do not themselves practise.

186 You cannot adhere always to one fixed and unbending rule; so that if it be often disadvantageous to be too open in your talk even with friends—I mean in matters which should be kept secret—on the other hand, to let your friends perceive that you are keeping something from them is a sure way to make them do the like by you. For since nothing gains you another's confidence so much as his belief that you confide in him, your reticence towards others may deprive you of opportunities of learning from them. Here, therefore, as in so many other cases, the character of men, of times, and of circumstances has to be taken into account. To this end discretion is needed,

which,

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189 All cities, states, and governments are mortal, since either by nature or accident everything in this world must some time have an end. Accordingly, the citizen who happens to be living when his country is in its decline should not so much lament over its unhappy fortunes as over his own. For his country only suffers what it was fated to suffer. His is the infelicity of being born at the moment when his country has to fulfil its doom.

190 It is usual to comfort those who have not succeeded to their wishes by telling them to *look behind them and not before;* by which is meant that they should consider how many more there are who are worse off than there are who are better off than they. This is very excellent advice, and should influence men to be contented with their lot. Yet it is not so easy to follow. For Nature has so placed our eyes, that, without straining, we cannot look elsewhere than before us.

191 We cannot blame those who are slow in resolving. For although occasions do sometimes come wherein it is necessary to resolve quickly, still, as a rule, he makes more mistakes who

who resolves quickly than he who resolves slowly. What is in the highest degree to be blamed is slowness in execution after a resolve is taken; for this, it may be affirmed, always hurts, and never helps except by accident. I mention this that you may be on your guard against it; for I see that many, either from indolence and to avoid trouble, or from other causes, are guilty of this error.

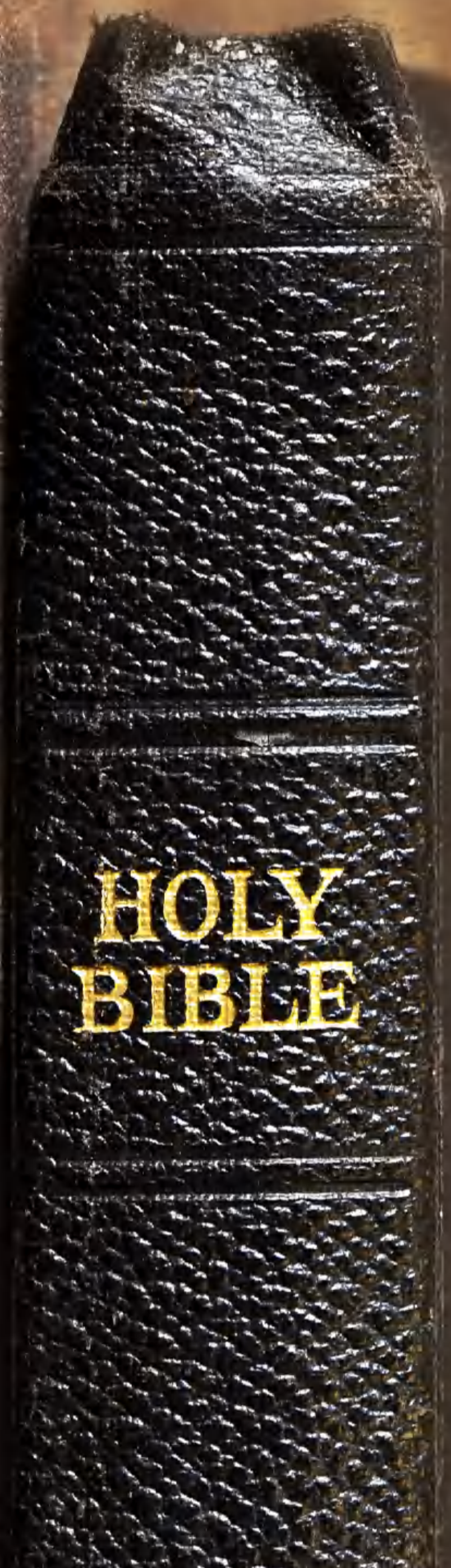
192 In matters of business take this as a maxim, that it is not enough to give things their beginning, direction, or impulse; we must also follow them up, and never slacken our efforts until they are brought to a conclusion. Whoso conducts business on this system contributes in no small measure to its settlement; while he who follows a different plan will often assume things to be ended which in truth are hardly begun, and the difficulties whereof are not yet reached; such are the heedlessness, futility, and perversity of men, and such the lets and hindrances that things present in their own nature. Follow this rule; the doing so has sometimes gained me great honour, as a contrary course will bring him who adopts it great disgrace.

Any

193 Any one who engages in secret practices against the state must above all things be careful not to communicate by letters; for these are often intercepted, and furnish proof which cannot be controverted. And though nowadays there be many cautious methods of writing, there have also been discovered many aids for their interpretation. It is far safer to communicate through those of your household than by letter; and for this reason it is most difficult and dangerous for men of inferior rank to embark in such designs, seeing they have few whom they can employ, and in these can place little trust. For there is small risk and great gain in betraying a private man to please a prince.

194 Though we must be cautious in our undertakings, we are not therefore to conjure up so many difficulties in respect of them as shall make us stop short from thinking success hopeless. On the contrary, we are to reflect that greater facilities may disclose themselves in the execution of our designs, and that as we proceed obstacles may disappear of themselves. This is undeniable, and every one who has business to transact has daily proof of it. Had

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this humiliation therefore as you would flee fire. Many are the exiles from their country who never need have been so had they taken this counsel to heart. For it does not so much help a man that it was from his fidelity to this or the other prince that he has been driven from his home, as it hurts him that the prince, seeing him an outlaw, should say, "Without me this fellow can do nothing," and accordingly should treat him as he pleases, without regard to his services.

197 Let him who has to treat with several on matters that raise many questions and difficulties be careful, if the case admits of it, to take each point apart, and say nothing of the second until the first be settled. For so it may happen that those who oppose him on one point will not go against him on another; whereas, were all the points to be taken in connection, every man who objected to any one of them would resist him upon all. Had Piero Soderini understood this, he would have succeeded when he sought to re-establish the tribunal of the *Quarantia*, and with the *Quarantia* might perhaps have restored the popular government. This hint as to getting men to swallow what is distasteful

tasteful in small morsels applies often in private affairs as well as in public.

198 Be sure that in all business, whether private or public, the secret of success lies in knowing how to use opportunity; and that whether you shall prosper or fail in one and the same transaction will depend upon your managing it in one way or in another.

199 When you have any object in view that you would conceal from others, or would have others believe different from what it is, endeavour to show them by the strongest and gravest reasons you can use that you intend the contrary. For when men imagine you to be convinced that reason favours a particular course, they readily persuade themselves that your resolves will tally with what your reason dictates.

200 To get support for some scheme of your own contriving from one who might otherwise oppose it, a good way is to commit its conduct to him, and make him, as it were, sponsor for its adoption and success. Light men especially are often won over by this device. For many of them are so tickled by vanity as to prefer the like empty

empty honours to the solid advantages which it should be their object to seek.

201 It seems a harsh and ill-natured thing to say—would to God it were untrue!—but there are more bad than good men in this world, and more especially wherever there comes to be a question as to property or power. Accordingly, except in the case of those whom, either from your own experience of them or on thoroughly trustworthy report, you know to be good, you never can be mistaken in keeping a sharp look-out when you are dealing with others. This, indeed, must be done discreetly, and so as not to gain you a name for being suspicious. But the substantial point is to trust none unless you can do so safely.

202 When a man takes revenge in such a way that the person hurt knows not whence the injury comes, it cannot but be said that what he does is done to wreak his rancour and hatred. The more generous course is to work openly, so that all may know who it is that inflicts the injury. He will then be thought to have acted not so much from hatred and vindictiveness as to clear his honour, that is,

to

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205 Twice I have held high command in armies employed on most important enterprises, and the lesson taught me by my experience has been, that if what is written concerning the military system of the ancients be true, as to a great extent I believe it to be, our modern system, as compared with it, is a mere shadow. For the captains of our days, lacking both energy and skill, and using neither artifice or stratagem, march at a snail's pace along a beaten track. Accordingly, when Signor Prospero Colonna, who commanded on the first expedition in which I took part, observed to me that I had not served in any previous campaign, I think I gave him a good answer when I said, "Nor in this campaign have I learned much."

206 I have no mind to discuss whether it is better for our bodies that we be guided by the physicians, or, as the Romans for a long while did, dispense with them altogether. Of this, however, I am certain, that whether from the difficulty of the art itself, or from want of care in the practitioner (who ought to be most vigilant, and to note with the nicest accuracy the slightest symptoms of his patient), the doctors of our times know not how to treat any

any but the most ordinary ailments, the highest reach of their skill being the cure of a double tertian; while if the case present any unusual complications, they deal with it in the dark and at random. Moreover, from his eagerness to make himself a name, and from the jealousies prevailing in the profession, the physician is a most odious creature, without conscience or scruple, who, confident that his blunders can hardly be brought home to him, whether to exalt himself or to discredit his rivals, every day subjects our bodies to his audacious experiments.

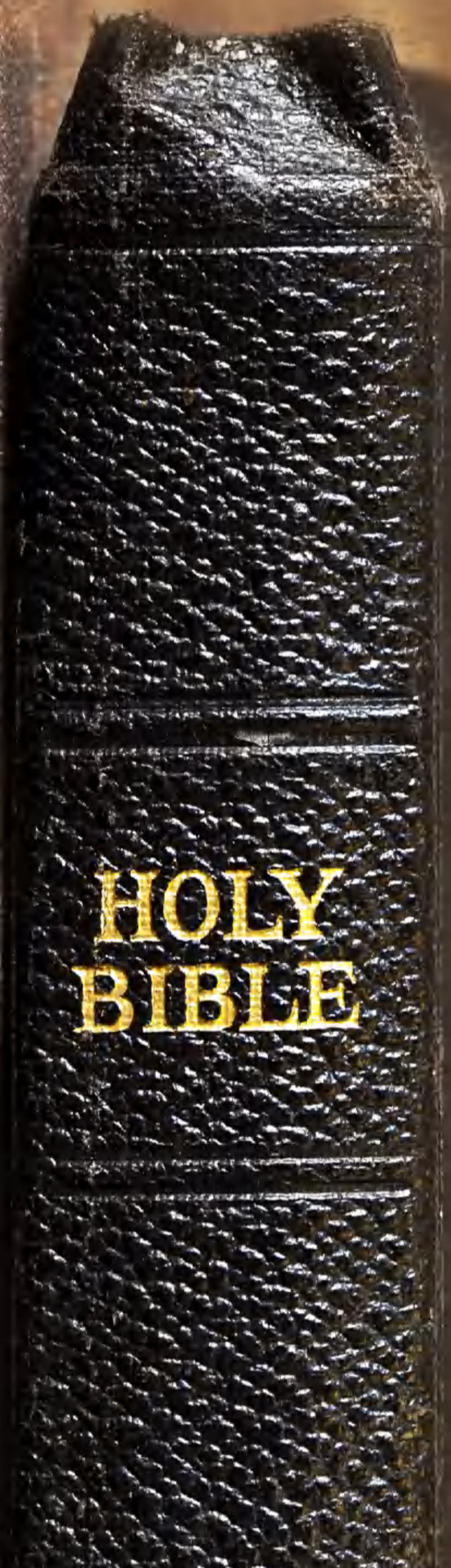
207 Of astrology, that is to say, the science which professes to foretell future events, it were folly to speak. Either the science is not a true one, or all the circumstances needed for its exercise cannot be ascertained, or else the human mind is unable to fathom its depths. But the sum of the matter is, that to hope to know the future by its means is a dream. The astrologers do not understand what they themselves say, and are never right but by accident; so that were you to take the prognostic of any one of them and the random guess of any other man, the latter were as likely as the former to turn out true.

The

208 The science of the law stands now on this footing, that if in the trial of a cause there be urged on one side some forcible argument, and on the other the authority of a doctor who has written on the subject, the latter will weigh more with the judge. Whence it follows that practising lawyers must acquaint themselves with all that every one has written, and in consequence that the time which should be devoted to searching into the reason of the thing is wasted in perusing books ; and this with such fatigue and weariness both of mind and body, that the profession of the law has come more to resemble the labour of the mechanic than the deliberation of the sage.

209 I think the decisions of the Turks, being delivered promptly and almost off-hand, are less objectionable than the methods of deciding in common use among Christians, the tardiness whereof occasions so much expense and hardship to suitors, that he who wins a cause might perhaps suffer less were judgment given against him on the first day of hearing. Besides, if we assume the decisions of the Turks to be given entirely in the dark, the chances are that, taking them altogether, one half of them will be justly decided ; so that, on the whole, the number of unrighteous

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and so hidden that the minds of men cannot attain to them.

212 Of the three methods of governing, to wit, by one, by a few, or by many, I believe that for Florence the second were the worst, as not natural to our city, and no more acceptable there than a tyranny, while the rivalries and dissensions attending it would give rise to the very same mischiefs that a tyranny produces; nay, might divide the city sooner, without effecting any of the good results a tyrant might bring about.

213 Reasons to the contrary stand in the way of every conclusion a man can come to, and of all his efforts to carry them out. For there is nothing so perfect as not to have some blemish, nor anything so evil as not to be tempered by some good. Whence it happens that many men, being perplexed by every trifling difficulty, rest always in suspense. These are the persons we speak of as over-scrupulous, because they entertain doubts about everything. We ought not to live thus, but, after balancing the disadvantages on both sides, should accept those that weigh least, remembering that no course we can take will in all respects be clear and perfect.

All

214 All men have defects, some more, some fewer. It follows that no friendship, fellowship, or dependent relation can endure unless allowances be made on both sides. We ought therefore to understand one another, and remembering that change will never free us from all imperfections, but only introduce us to new and perhaps greater, should try to endure one another. Let us be careful, however, to be compliant in such matters only as can be put up with, and are in themselves of no great moment.

215 How many things are blamed when done which, could we but see what must have followed had they not been done, would have been praised! How many things, on the other hand, are praised which, under like circumstances, had been blamed! Be not hasty, therefore, either to commend or condemn on a mere superficial view of things; but if you would form a just and solid judgment, look carefully below what appears to the eye.

216 In this world no man can choose the station into which he shall be born, his surroundings, or the measure of fortune he is to enjoy. Wherefore

Wherefore, in commending or condemning, we are not to consider in what circumstances we find a man, but the manner in which he bears himself therein. For blame or praise should be awarded according as men behave, and not depend on the condition in which they are placed; as in a theatre we do not think more of him who plays the part of king or lord than of him who plays the part of a servant, but look only to the merit of the performance.

217 Let not the fear of making enemies or of causing displeasure to others keep you from doing what it behoves you to do. For to do his duty brings a man reputation, and this will help him far more than the making a few enemies will hurt him. In this world we must either be dead outright or sometimes do things that give offence. But the same tact which guides us in bestowing pleasure is shown in knowing when and how to do things displeasing; that is to say, that they be done on just occasion, at fit season, with modesty, for honourable causes, and in creditable ways.

218 In this world of ours they manage their affairs well who keep their own interest always in

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footing that he can venture to persuade him to good courses or dissuade him from evil. For surely it is for the interest of a city that worthy men should at all times exercise influence. And although the ignorant and fanatical politicians of Florence have constantly judged otherwise, they might have recognised how disastrous would have been the government of the Medici had there been none about them but fools or knaves.

221 When enemies who usually have been leagued together against you chance to fall out, to attack one of them in the hope to dispose of him separately is often the occasion for all to unite afresh. It behoves you, therefore, to note carefully what the differences that have arisen between them are, together with all the other conditions and circumstances in which they stand, that you may judge whether it is more for your interest to single out one of them for attack, or to stand aloof and look on while they fight it out among themselves.

222 If leisure alone breed not fantastical humours, without it these can hardly come into existence.

223 Whoso seeks honour and fame in his native city, not by faction or usurpation, but by striving to be accounted wise and able, and by rendering good service to his country, is a praiseworthy and useful citizen. Would to God our republic overflowed with ambition such as this! But pernicious are they who make self-aggrandisement their sole end and aim. For he who does so is held by no tie whether of justice or honour, and will upset everything to reach his goal.

224 He who is not in truth a good citizen cannot long be thought so. Wherefore, though a man might desire rather to seem than to be good, he must strive to be so in reality; otherwise he will not in the end seem so.

225 Men are naturally inclined to good; so that when they draw no gain or advantage from evil, good is more pleasing than evil to all of them. But because their nature is frail, and the occasions inviting to evil infinite, they are readily turned from

from their natural bent by self-interest. For which reason, not to do violence to their nature but to maintain its authority, wise legislators have contrived a spur and a curb in the shape of reward and punishment; and unless these be in use in a commonwealth, few indeed of its citizens will be found good. Whereof we have daily proof in Florence.

226 Should we read or hear it said of any one that, without advantage or profit to himself, he preferred evil to good, we should have to call him rather a beast than a man, as lacking an instinct common to all men by nature.

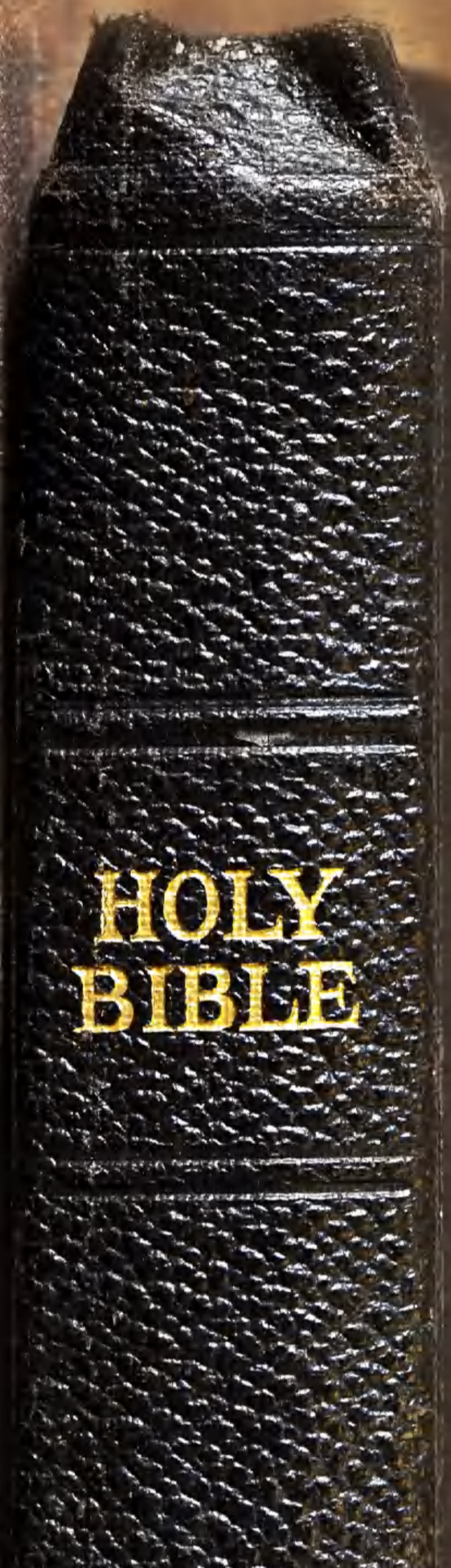
227 Great defects and inconveniences are inseparable from a free government. And yet the wise and good of our city approve it as a less evil.

228 We may take it, then, that in Florence he who is a wise is also a good citizen; since were he not good, he would not be wise.

229 That generosity which pleases the multitude is very seldom found in the truly wise. Wherefore he who seems generous is less to be commended than he who seems discreet.

In

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lay aside all scruples, but that in excess they are hurtful.

235 It profits much that you conduct your affairs secretly, but much more that you contrive not to seem secret to your friends. For many men, when they see you unwilling to impart your affairs to them, look on it as a slight and feel affronted.

236 Three things I would willingly see before I die. And yet, though I were to live to a great age, I fear I shall see none of them. I desire to see a well-ordered republic established in Florence; Italy free from all her barbarian invaders; and the world delivered from the tyranny of these rascally priests.

237 Whosoever is not well secured by treaty, or by being himself so strong that in no case can he have ground for fear, acts unwisely if he stands neutral in the wars of other states; since in doing so he will disoblige the vanquished and will rest a prey to the victor. And let him who disregards reasons look to the example of our own city, and to what befell it from remaining neutral in the war which Pope Julius and the Catholic

Catholic King waged against King Louis of France.

238 If you are resolved to remain neutral, at least arrange terms of neutrality with the side that desires it. For this in itself is a way of taking part with that side, which, if victorious, may perhaps be withheld from harming you by some sense of obligation or scruple of honour.

239 Far higher satisfaction will be found in controlling than in gratifying the passions. For such gratification is brief, and of the body; whereas the satisfaction we feel when passion has been subdued is lasting, and is of the mind and conscience.

240 A good name is more to be desired than riches; but since without riches a good name can now-a-days hardly be preserved, worthy men should seek them, not in excess, but so far as may be needed for acquiring and maintaining credit and influence.

241 We citizens of Florence are mostly poor; yet from our manner of living we all greatly desire riches. For which reason we can hardly preserve

serve the freedom of our city; since this appetite makes us pursue our own selfish advantage without thought or heed for the public glory or honour.

242 The blood of citizens is the mortar wherewith the governments of tyrants are cemented. Let every man therefore do what he can that no edifice of this sort be built in his city.

243 Citizens who live in a republic wherein the government, though tainted with some defects, is still a tolerable one, should not seek to change it; since almost always the change will be for the worse. For it is not in the power of him who makes changes to secure that the new government shall exactly conform to his intentions and wishes.

244 Most of the misdeeds done in cities by the great have their origin in suspicion. Wherefore, when once a man has grown great, a city has no cause to thank those who without good occasion conspire against him. For this increases his suspicions, and in consequence the harshness of his tyranny.

245 With the poor malignity may easily be bred by

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250 Since endless vicissitudes occur every hour in warfare, we ought not amid so many changes to be too much elated by favourable tidings, or cast down by adverse. Let this also be a lesson to him to whom opportunities offer themselves in war not to let them slip; for they last for a brief time only.

251 As merchants for the most part break and seamen drown, so is it the common fate of those who govern for long the territories of the Church to fall into disgrace.

252 The Marquis of Pescara once said to me, "Things all men desire rarely come to pass." If this be true, the reason is that it is the few who commonly set things in motion, and that the ends which they pursue are almost always opposed to the ends and objects of the many.

253 Never contend against religion or against aught else that seems to have dependence upon God. For these are matters concerning which the minds of fools are too much made up to be open to argument.

254 It has been truly said that religion in excess is

is hurtful to the world, since it weakens men's minds, involves them in an infinity of errors, and withdraws them from many generous and honourable pursuits. In saying this, however, I would not be understood as derogating from the Christian faith or from the veneration due to it, but rather as seeking to confirm and strengthen it by distinguishing what is in excess from what is sufficient, and by inciting men to consider well what they should make account of, and what they may safely disregard.

255 'Tis well to have all the guarantees for good behaviour you can get from your enemy, his promises, his plighted word, the engagements of his friends, and every other assurance. But owing to the perversity of mankind and the changes in circumstances and seasons, there is no safeguard so sure and certain as so to contrive matters that your security shall rest rather on your enemy's want of power than on his want of will to harm you.

256 As things go in this world, you can have no greater good fortune than to see your enemy prostrate at your feet and in your power. To secure which result no means are to be neglected.

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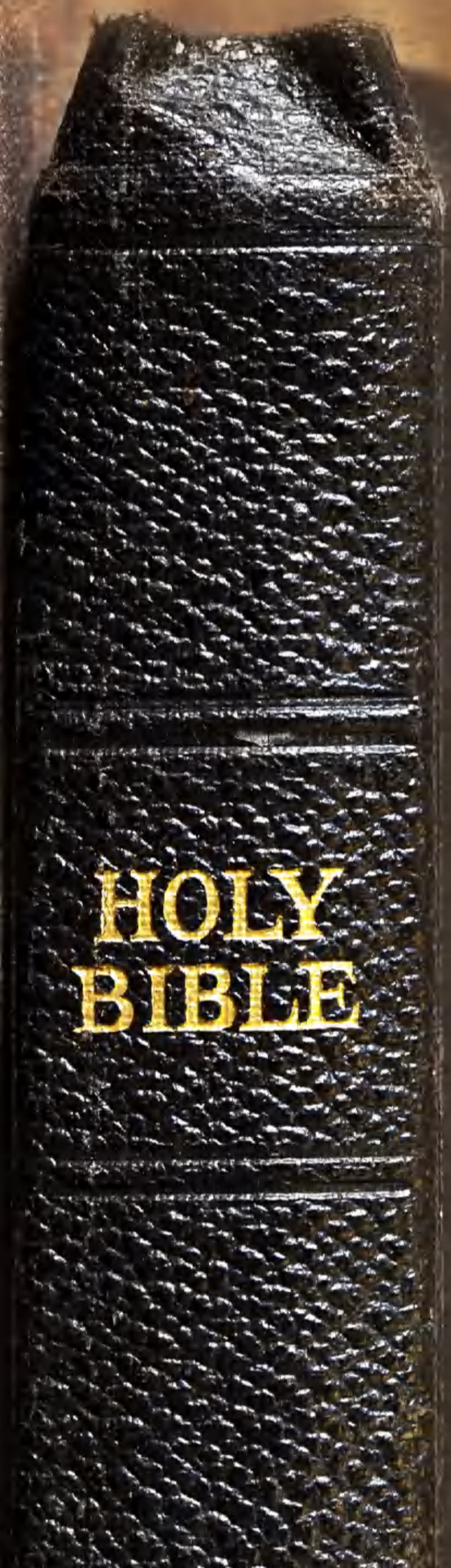
This, I say, is great good fortune. But it is a finer thing to use this good fortune worthily: I mean by extending mercy and pardon. For this is proper to a generous and lofty soul.

257 These maxims are rules that may be written in books; but the exceptional cases, which, resting upon other grounds, must be dealt with otherwise, scarce admit of being recorded elsewhere than on the tablets of discretion.

258 That *place shows a man* was a saying much applauded by the ancients, not only because place makes it plain whether a man's capacity be great or small, but also because power and freedom from restraint display more fully the bent of his mind and demonstrate what his true character is. For the higher the station a man fills, the less check or hindrance has he in indulging his natural temper.

259 See that you fall not into disfavour with him who is set over you in your city, nor assume the mode and tenor of your life to be of such a sort that you can count on never coming into his hands. For a thousand unforeseen cases may arise wherein you will be compelled to have

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262 The above maxim is to be so observed that the name you get for not being liberal shall not cause you to be shunned; and this you may easily avoid by extraordinary liberality in one or two cases. For hope has naturally such dominion over men, that a single instance of munificence makes a deeper impression and helps you more than a hundred instances of services insufficiently requited hurts you.

263 Men have a better memory for injuries than for benefits; and even when they do remember a benefit, think of it as less than in truth it was, while they persuade themselves that their deserts are far greater than they are in reality. The contrary holds as regards injuries, for these vex us more than they reasonably should. Accordingly, other conditions being the same, beware of doing one man a pleasure which must necessarily afford equal displeasure to another; for according to the rule above stated, you will lose on the whole more than you gain.

264 You may count more safely on one who has need of you, or who for the time has the same ends to serve, than on one whom you have benefited. For, as a rule, men are ungrateful.

If

If you would not be deceived, make your calculations on this footing.

265 I have noted down the foregoing maxims that you may learn how to live and to rate things at their true worth, not to withdraw you from conferring benefits. For not only is beneficence a noble impulse, and one that springs from a generous nature, but it may also chance to be requited, and that in a degree to make amends for many instances of ingratitude. Nay, it may be believed that the Power which is above us takes delight in generous actions, and therefore will not permit them to remain always unrewarded.

266 Endeavour to make friends, since they will be of service to you at times, in places, and in circumstances in which you least expect it. This is a trite maxim, but none can rightly estimate its value who has not in some extreme need himself experienced its truth.

267 Frank sincerity pleases all men, and is a noble quality, though sometimes hurtful to him who practises it. Simulation, on the other hand, is useful; nay, from the perverse nature of men is often necessary, odious and unseemly though it be.

be. I know not therefore which of the two we should prefer. I can believe, however, that a man ought habitually to use the one without wholly renouncing the other. I mean that in everyday affairs he should adhere to the former, so as to obtain a name for openness and candour; and yet, on certain rare and urgent occasions should resort to deception. When a man lives thus, his simulation is the more serviceable and the more likely to succeed, since his reputation for its opposite makes him the more readily trusted.

268 For the above reasons, while I commend him not who passes his whole life in simulating and dissembling, I excuse him who only occasionally resorts to these arts.

269 If you would not have it known that you have done or sought to do some particular thing, even when it has been all but ascertained and published, be sure that it will always be useful to deny it. For a strenuous denial, though it may not convince him who believes or has proof to the contrary, will at least stagger and perplex him.

270 'Tis incredible how much it profits a ruler that he

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whether of pleasure or discontent, is a great ease to a man's heart. Still it is dangerous; wherefore, however hard it may be, it is wise to abstain.

273 When ambassador in Spain at the court of that wise and renowned king, Ferdinand of Aragon, I observed that when he desired to engage in any new enterprise, or to carry out any other matter of importance, it was not his custom first to publish and afterwards to justify his intentions, but to do exactly the reverse. For before it was known that he meditated any measure, he contrived to have it everywhere proclaimed that, for such and such reasons, here was a thing it behoved the king to take in hand. Accordingly, when afterwards he disclosed that he meant to do what was recognised by all to be necessary and right, his resolve was accepted with incredible applause and favour.

274 Even they who, ascribing everything to prudence and capacity, would seek to shut out fortune, cannot deny it to be a happy chance that opportunities should at the right moment present themselves for displaying to advantage those talents or qualities wherein

a man excels. For we see from experience that the same qualities are differently esteemed at different times, and that things which are pleasing if done to-day may displease if done to-morrow.

275 I would not discourage those who, kindled by love of their country, are ready to risk their lives to restore its freedom. But this I do say, that he is unwise who for his own ends seeks to change the government of our city. For this is a perilous task, and experience shows that but few such attempts succeed. And even when they are successful, it rarely happens that you gain by the change anything like the advantages you looked for, while you are sure to be involved in endless trouble and anxiety, having constantly to fear that those whom you have driven away may return and overthrow you.

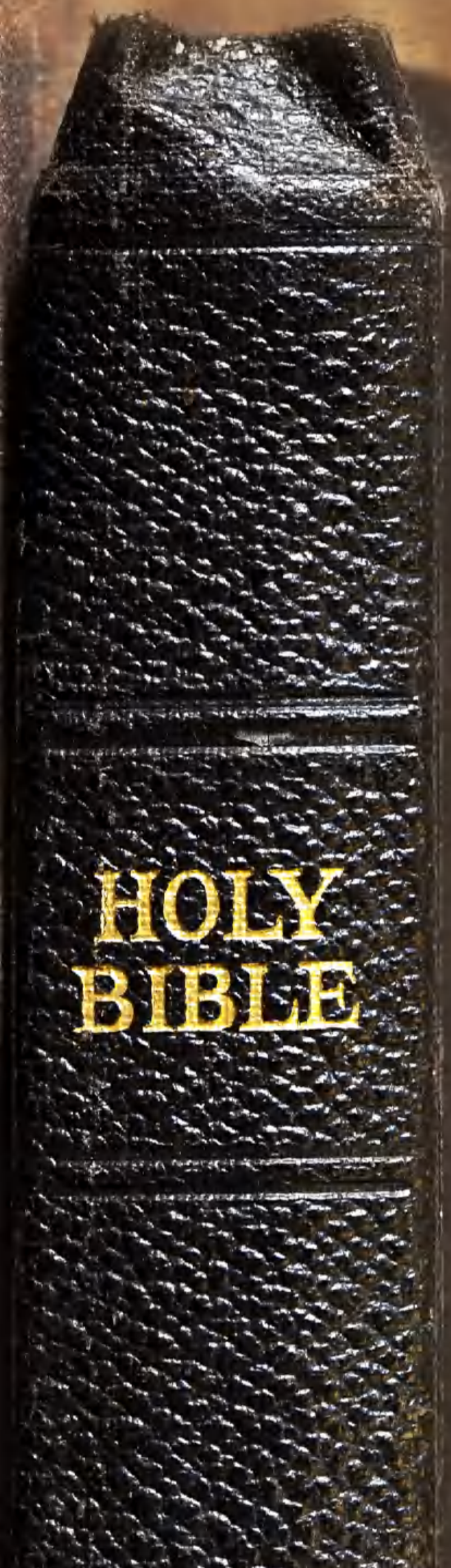
276 Labour not to effect changes that only substitute one face for another. For what profits it if you suffer at the hands of Martin the very same wrongs and injuries which before you had to endure from Peter? What satisfaction, for instance, do you find in seeing Messer Goro make

make his exit, when another of the same quality enters in his room?

277 Whoso would meddle in plots should bear in mind that nothing is more fatal to their success than the endeavour to make them too safe. For to this end longer time is needed, more men must be privy, more interests must be considered; all of which circumstances give occasion for your scheme being discovered. Nay, it may further be believed that Fortune, within whose control such matters lie, is displeased with him who seeks to withdraw himself from her power and to make himself secure. I maintain, therefore, that it is better to run some risk in carrying out your plot than to be too careful of safety.

278 Draw not where you have no assets, nor discount prospective gains, for often these may not be realised; and we see the common cause of the bankruptcy of great merchants to be this, that anticipating large future returns, they draw bills of exchange bearing high interest which have to be met at a fixed date. But frequently either the expected profits fall short, or are deferred beyond the time intended, so that

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my good fortune, I have obtained them beyond my hopes. Yet never have I found in any of these things the satisfaction I had looked for. A warning to him who well considers it to stay his pursuit of things all men covet.

282 Great station is coveted by all, because whatsoever is good in it shows on the surface, while the evil is hid below. Were any one to see it as it is, his desire to possess it might perhaps be less. For of a truth it is replete with dangers, rivalries, endless troubles and annoyances. But what makes it sought after, even by pure hearts, is the longing we all have to surpass our fellows, for this reason more than any other, that in nothing else can we resemble God.

283 Things we do not anticipate move us beyond comparison more than those that are foreseen. Wherefore I pronounce that to be a great and resolute spirit which stands undismayed amid sudden dangers and disasters; for this in my judgment is the rarest excellence.

284 When a thing is done, could we but know what would have followed had it been left undone, or had the contrary been done, we should find

find that many things men blame or praise deserve a very different judgment.

285 There can be no doubt that the older men grow, the more prone they are to avarice. The cause is said to be that their minds lose their vigour. I think this reason insufficient, since he must be a very weak-minded old man who does not see that our needs lessen as our years multiply. Moreover, I note that in old men, at any rate in many of them, luxury (so far as appetite goes, though not as regards enjoyment), cruelty, and other vices are constantly on the increase. The explanation may perhaps be that the longer a man lives the more he becomes used to the things of this world, and as a consequence the more he loves them.

286 It is due to the same cause that the older a man grows the more grievous it appears to him to die, and the more it would seem from his acts and thoughts as though he felt safe to live for ever.

287 It is commonly believed, and we often see instances of it, that gains ill-gotten are not transmitted beyond a third generation. St. Augustine

Augustine says that God permits their enjoyment to him who acquires them in return for whatsoever good he may have done during his lifetime, but that they never pass much further by reason of the sentence God has pronounced against wealth dishonestly come by. I once told my father that I thought there was another explanation, namely, that he who acquires wealth, being commonly brought up poor, loves what he gains for himself, and understands the arts whereby it may be kept; whereas, his sons and grandsons being bred up in riches, and neither knowing what it is to get wealth, nor possessed of the arts and methods for preserving it, readily waste it.

288 The longing to have children cannot be blamed, since it is natural. Yet I say boldly that it is a kind of happiness not to have them. For even he whose children are good and sensible has undoubtedly more anxiety from them than comfort. This I have seen to be the case with my own father, who in his day was cited in Florence as an example of a sire blessed with good sons. Think then how it must fare with him who has worthless offspring.

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most just. This wideness of the law releases the judge from having to render an account before the courts, because, as his action is not regulated by the law, he can always excuse himself. Still it is never left within his power to give away the property of one suitor to another.

291 We see from experience that masters make little account of their servants, and dismiss or ill-treat them as their humour or interest prompts. Those, therefore, are wise servants who make their masters a return in kind, always, be it understood, maintaining their integrity and honour.

292 Let young men be persuaded that experience teaches many lessons, and more to persons of large intelligence than to those of little. Whoso thinks this over will readily understand the cause.

293 Though you be of the keenest discernment, there are certain things you can never arrive at or rightly apprehend without that experience which alone teaches them. This hint will be best appreciated by him who has had much business

business to transact, for he will have learned for himself how good and useful an instructor experience is.

294 The prince who savours somewhat of the prodigal is undoubtedly more popular than one who inclines to be miserly. And yet the contrary should be the case. For while the miser takes from no man, the prodigal is obliged to resort to extortion and rapacity; so that there are many more who suffer from his exactions than there are who profit by his bounty. The explanation I believe to be, that hope has greater influence over men than fear; and that there are more who hope to gain something from the prodigal prince than there are who fear being oppressed by him.

295 To be well looked on by your brethren and kinsfolk brings you numberless benefits, whereof, because they do not show themselves one by one, you take no heed, but which in many ways forward your interests and cause you to be held in esteem. Strive, therefore, to preserve this esteem and this good-will, even at the cost of some inconvenience. And herein men often err, being moved by the petty annoyances that

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are seen, while they disregard the great advantages that are unseen.

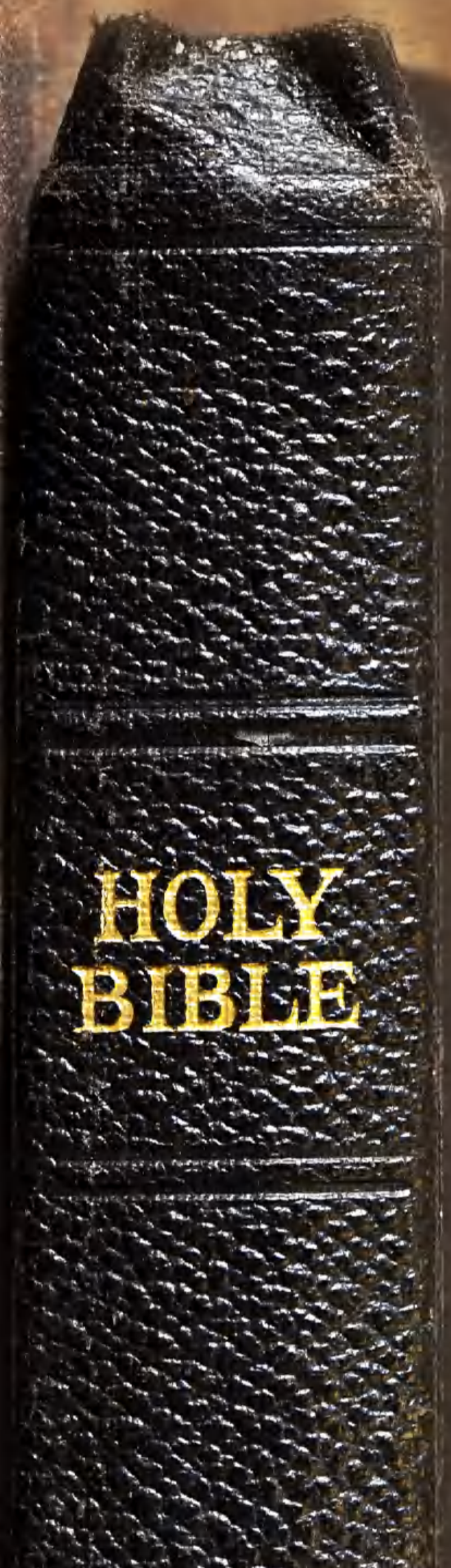
296 Whoso has authority and lordship over others can stretch and extend them even beyond the limit of his strength. For his subjects do not discern or accurately measure what he can or cannot do. Nay, often from imagining his power to be greater than in truth it is, they submit to him in things to which he never could have compelled them.

297 In my youth I believed that no amount of reflection would enable me to see more in a thing than I took in at a glance. But experience has shown me this opinion to be utterly false; and you may laugh at any one who maintains the contrary. The longer we reflect, the clearer things grow and the better we understand them.

298 When occasion offers for obtaining what you desire, seize it at once. For the things of this world are so fleeting that you never can say you have a thing till you grasp it in your hand. For the same reason, when you are threatened with anything that displeases you, try to put it off as long as you can. For we see

every

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303 A tyrant will spare no pains to discover your secret mind—I mean as to whether or no you are contented with his government—by watching your movements, by questioning those who converse with you, and by arguing with you himself on all sorts of subjects, putting cases and asking your opinion. Wherefore, if you would not have him read your thoughts, be well on your guard against the means he uses, avoiding conduct that might rouse his suspicions, being careful what you say even to intimates, and speaking and replying to him in such fashion that he can draw no conclusion. Wherein you will succeed if you keep it fixed in your mind that he is doing all he can to circumvent and see through you.

304 If you be of great station in your country and live under a brutal and bloodthirsty tyrant, I know of no advice that can profit you save that you withdraw into exile. But when the tyrant, either from prudence or from necessity and the circumstances of his position, conducts himself discreetly, you should seek, being a man of quality, to be thought of importance, and to be a person of courage, yet of a tranquil temper, and not desirous of change unless forced upon you. For in this case the tyrant will caress you,

and

and endeavour to give you no cause for seeking to bring about changes. But he will not act thus if he know you to be of a restless humour; for then, judging it impossible for you to keep quiet, he will always be contriving an occasion to crush you.

305 In the case above mentioned, it is better not to be of the tyrant's most familiar intimates; for so he will not only caress you more, but in many respects will take fewer liberties with you than with his own friends. In this way you may enjoy his greatness, and yourself grow great on his fall. This, however, is not safe advice for any man to follow who is not of great standing in his country.

306 There is a wide difference between having your subjects discontented and having them desperate. For desperate men think of nothing but changes, and seek them even to their peril. Discontented men, though in truth they desire change, do not invite occasions for it, but await them.

307 Good government is impossible without severity, for the frowardness of men demands it. But

But with severity you must use address, and do all you can to have it believed that cruelty is not pleasing to you, and that you only resort to it because you are obliged, and for the public good.

308 We should look to substance, not to appearances and to the surface of things. Yet it is incredible how much favour smooth words and empty compliments will bring you among men. The reason I believe to be that every one seems to himself to deserve more than is really his due, and in consequence is vexed if he see you do not value him as he thinks he merits.

309 It is honest and manly never to promise what you do not mean to perform. Nevertheless, since men are not ruled by reason, he to whom you deny a thing, though on good grounds, will commonly rest dissatisfied. It is otherwise with him who is liberal of his promises. For many things may happen making it unnecessary for him to fulfil what he has promised, and in this way he gives satisfaction without putting himself about. Nay, even when it comes to performance he is seldom left without some excuse, and many men are so simple that they let themselves be cajoled

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danger than he ought, must lack sense. But to clear up the point, which is somewhat obscure, I say that not all dangers are realised ; for some a man will escape by his vigilance, address, or valour, while chance will dispose of others in a thousand accidental ways. Accordingly, he who discerns dangers is not to assume them all as certain ; but prudently distinguishing which of them he may hope to overcome by himself, and against which of them he may hope to be aided by Fortune, should be of good heart, nor ever withdraw from an honourable and manly enterprise through fear that he will encounter all the perils which he knows to lie on the road.

313 He errs who says that learning hurts men's brains. For though this may perhaps be true of him who has a weak brain, where the brain is sound, learning makes it perfect ; excellence of letters joined to excellence of nature forming a noble whole.

314 Not for their own advantage were princes first ordained, since no man would have submitted himself to a gratuitous servitude, but in the interest of the people at large, to the end that they might be well governed. Accordingly, when

when a prince ceases to consider his people, he is no longer a prince, but a tyrant.

315 Avarice in a prince is incomparably more hateful than in a private man; for as he has larger means of giving, he withholds proportionally more. Besides, while the property of the private man is absolutely his own, for his own use, and in his power to deal with as he pleases without just cause of offence to any, all that the prince has is given him to the use and benefit of others; so that in keeping it to himself he robs others of their due.

316 I maintain that the Duke of Ferrara, who busies himself in trade, not only lessens himself thereby, but is a tyrant, in that he does what it is the business of private men, and not his to do; and in this way offends as much against the people as they would against him were they to interfere with what is the office of the prince alone.

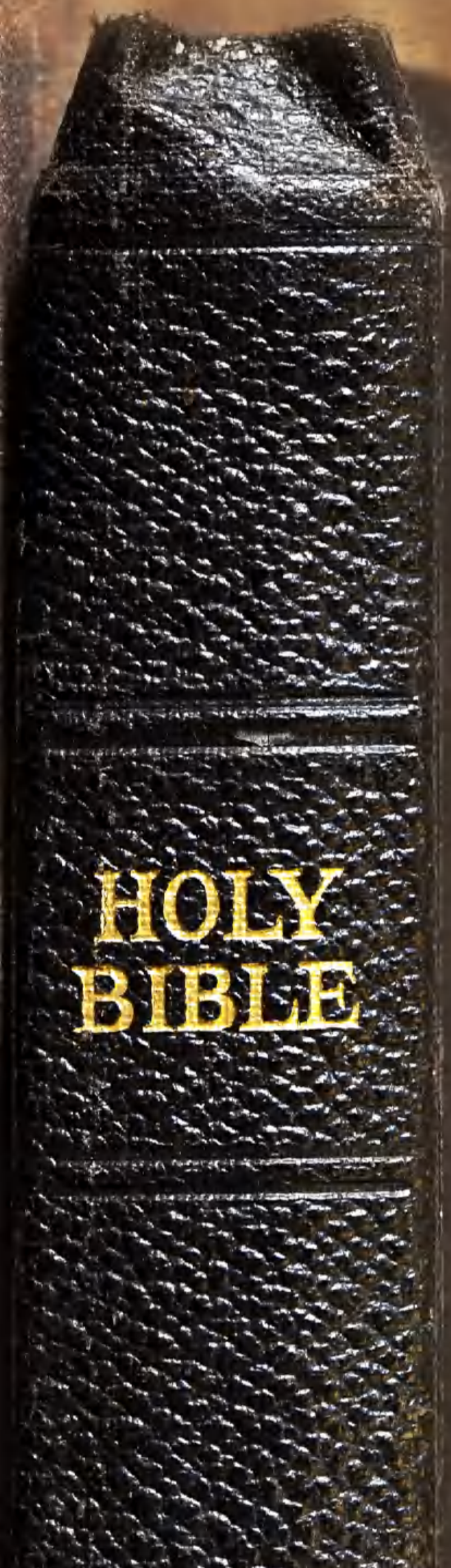
317 By him who well considers the matter, all states will be found to have had their origin in violence; nor, save as regards republics, so far as their own territory extends and no further, is there any dominion

dominion that is legitimate in its beginnings; not even that of the Emperor. For this last is founded on the authority of the Romans, who were the greatest usurpers of all. Nor do I except from this rule the priests, who, to keep us under, resort to a twofold violence, using at once both spiritual weapons and temporal.

318 The affairs of this world are so shifting and depend on so many accidents, that it is hard to form any judgment concerning the future; nay, we see from experience that the forecasts even of the wise almost always turn out false. Wherefore I commend not the prudence of those who renounce a present though less good through fear of a future but greater evil, unless the evil be very near or very certain. For since what you fear is often not realised, you may find that you have sacrificed what gave you pleasure to a groundless alarm. Still it is a wise saying *di cosa nasce cosa*, one thing leads to another.

319 In arguments of state I have often found men judge wrongly from looking to what this or the other prince ought in reason to do, and not to what his temper and character will prompt him to do. He, for instance, who would form a just opinion

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to act as these maxims teach, but to obey in whatsoever else reason enjoins, and that without effort.

323 He will not marvel at the abject temper of our citizens, who reads in Cornelius Tacitus how the Romans themselves, accustomed to rule the world and to live in so great glory, grew under their emperors so basely slavish, that even the haughty and tyrannical Tiberius sickened at their servility.

324 If displeased with any man, do all you can to prevent his seeing it, for otherwise he will become estranged. And occasions often arise when he might and would have served you had you not lost him by showing your dislike. Of this I have had experience to my own profit. For once and again I have felt ill-disposed towards some one who not being aware of my hostility has afterwards helped me when I needed help and proved my good friend.

325 Things fated to perish not by violence but by a gradual wasting, often hold out much longer than at first seemed possible; not merely because their decay is slower than was counted on,

on, but also because men, if stubborn to endure, will do and suffer things beyond belief. Accordingly, we find that a war which has to be brought to an end by famine, failure of ammunition, want of money, or the like, always lasts much longer than was expected. In like manner the life of the hectic patient is constantly prolonged beyond the time anticipated by the physicians and those about him. So too the merchant who is eaten up by usury will keep his feet for an inconceivable time before he breaks.

326 In your intercourse with the great, never suffer yourself to be cajoled by those caresses and surface civilities wherewith they are wont to lure men whither they please, that they may strangle them. And the harder it is to resist, the more must you be on your guard, and keeping cool and collected, avoid being carried off your feet by their attentions.

327 You can have no higher excellence than greatly to esteem honour. He who does so will fear no danger, nor be guilty of any unworthy deed. Hold to this, and it can scarce happen but that all else shall go well with you. *Expertus loquor.*

You

328 You may laugh at those who are always talking of liberty. I will not say at all of them, yet I except but few. For if these men thought their fortunes would be mended under a tyranny, they would rush to it post-haste. With almost all men regard for their own interest prevails, and few indeed are they who know the worth of glory and honour.

329 I have always found it hard to persuade myself that God would suffer the sons of Duke Lodovico Sforza to enjoy the state of Milan; not so much because their father wickedly usurped it, as because in effecting this, he brought about the servitude and ruin of all Italy, and so many consequent calamities throughout Christendom.

330 I maintain that a good and patriotic citizen should seek to stand well with a tyrant, not merely to secure his own safety, he being in danger if he be held in suspicion, but also for the welfare of his country. For in this way he gains opportunity of forwarding by his actions and counsels many useful measures, and hindering many that are the reverse. And they are fools who blame him. For both they and their city

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were they to be destroyed, the hatred which the people bear to them would be turned against us.

334 My father gave Piero Soderini wise counsel when he recommended that of our own accord we should recall the Medici as private citizens. For in this way we should have got rid of our exiles, who are the worst evil a state can suffer from; and at the same time have deprived the family of the Medici of their influence both within the city and without. Within the city, because on returning there, and finding themselves on a mere equality with others, they would not have desired to remain. Without, because those princes who believed them to have a great following at home, on seeing them come back and no longer powerful, would have ceased to hold them in account. But to carry out this advice successfully needed perhaps a more spirited and courageous magistrate than was Piero Soderini.

335 It is the nature of a people, as it is of individual men, to be always striving to better their condition. It is prudence, therefore, to refuse their first demands. For by yielding these

you

you do not bring them to a stay, but on the contrary encourage them to ask more, and with more urgency than at first. The more you give them to drink, the fiercer grows their thirst.

336 Past events throw light on future, because the world has always been the same as it now is, and all that is now, or shall be hereafter, has been in time past. Things accordingly repeat themselves, but under changed names and colours, so that it is not every one who can recognise them, but only he who is discerning and who notes and considers them diligently.

337 Doubtless the man of ordinary parts has more enjoyment in this world, and lives a longer, and in some sort a happier life, than he who is of a loftier intellect. For a noble mind is likely enough to fret and torment its owner. But the first partakes more of the brute than of the man. The other transcends human nature and approaches the divine.

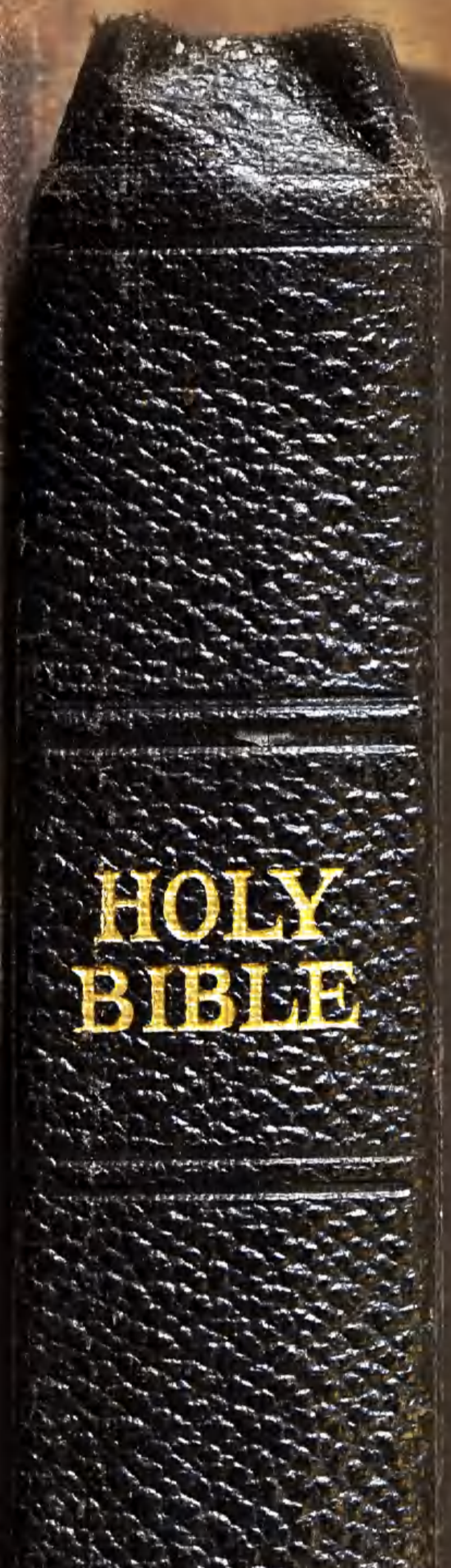
338 If you look to it closely, you shall find that not only do words, manners, and fashions in dress

dress alter from age to age, but, what is more remarkable, that men's tastes and inclinations alter. A like diversity may be seen in different countries in the same age. I do not lay so much stress on the difference in manners, for this may result from difference in training, as on the variation in men's tastes and appetites, even in respect of food.

339 Enterprises which, undertaken at a wrong moment, are difficult or impossible, become easy enough when aided by time and opportunity. Those who enter on them unseasonably will not only fail in their efforts then, but will endanger subsequent success at a time when it might be looked for. To be accounted wise you must be patient.

340 In my governments, when disputes came before me which for any reason I desired should be accommodated, it was my custom to say nothing about an accord, but by interposing adjournments and delays to bring the parties to propose it themselves. In this way, what would have been rejected had I suggested it at the first, has had the ground so prepared for it, that when the right moment came,

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since in particular cases, to which a different reason applies, they will not hold good. What these cases are cannot be defined by any fixed rule, nor is any book to be found that will teach them. This light must be imparted first by nature and then by experience.

344 I am convinced that in no office or position of authority is greater prudence or capacity needed than in the command of an army. For infinite are the things for which a commander has to provide and issue orders beforehand, and infinite the accidents and difficulties which present themselves from hour to hour; so that of a truth he needs have more eyes than Argus. Not only for its importance, therefore, but also for the prudence it demands, I hold that as compared with this every other charge is insignificant.

345 To speak of the people is to speak of a madman; of a monster stuffed with inconsistencies and errors; whose empty judgments lie as far from truth, as Spain, according to Ptolemy, from India.

346 My nature has always disposed me to desire the overthrow of the government of the Church.

But

But fortune has so willed it that my relations with two Popes have been of a kind to force me to labour and strive for their advancement. Were it not for this, I should have loved Martin Luther more than myself, in the hope that his following might destroy, or at any rate clip the wings of, this vile tyranny of the priests.

347 It is one thing to be brave, another to face danger out of regard to honour. In both cases the danger is recognised, but the brave man believes he can defend himself from it, and but for this confidence would not await it. The other may dread danger more than he ought, yet stands his ground: not that he is not afraid, but that he is resolved to suffer hurt sooner than shame.

348 It often happens in our city that they who have been most forward in aiding another to get possession of the government presently become his enemies. The cause is said to be, that as men of this sort are commonly persons of rank and parts, and possibly of a turbulent temper, he who has the government in his hands comes to look on them with distrust. It may also be that, from seeming to themselves to have deserved

deserved much, such persons often aspire to more than it is fit they should have, and are offended if they do not get it; whence there comes afterwards hostility on the one side and suspicion on the other.

349 When he who has promoted or has been the prime cause of my advancement would have me govern as he pleases, in seeking thus to use the authority he has gained for me, he cancels his former benefits and gives me just cause for breaking with him; nor am I, because I do so, to be called ungrateful.

350 Let none claim praise for not doing or for doing those things which, if he did or omitted to do, he would deserve blame.

351 The Castilian proverb says, "The rope breaks where it is weakest." In any rivalry or contention with one who is more powerful or more feared than you, you are sure to come off worst, even though right, honour, and gratitude should all demand the contrary. For men are wont to look more to their interest than to their duty.

352 I have not the art of showing myself to advantage,

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354 All political writers are agreed that the government of a sole prince, when he is good, is preferable to the government of an oligarchy or of a democracy, assuming these likewise to be good. And the reasons are obvious. Similarly they are agreed that the government of a sole prince sooner than the others falls away from being good, and when bad is the worst of all, especially where it passes by inheritance, since a good and wise father is rarely succeeded by a son like himself. I wish, however, that these writers, after considering all the conditions and risks, had told us which form of government a new city should most desire; I mean, whether to be subject to the rule of one, of many, or of a few.

355 A master knows less than any one else about his servants, and a prince's knowledge of his subjects is in like ratio. For these do not open themselves before him, as they do before others, but, on the contrary, seek to cloak themselves, and to appear to him of a character different from their true one.

356 If you live at court and are the follower of some great lord, and would be employed by him

him in his affairs, endeavour to keep yourself always in his sight. For every hour things will occur to be done which he will commit to him whom he sees, or who is at hand, and not to you if he has to seek or send for you. And whosoever misses an opening, however small, will often lose the introduction or approach to matters of greater moment.

357 Those Friars who preach of predestination and the like thorny articles of our faith seem to me to lack wisdom; since it were better not to give men occasion to think of things they can hardly understand than to awaken doubts in their minds which afterwards we can only silence by saying, "So our faith declareth; thus must we believe."

358 In Florence, though you be a good citizen and no enemy to liberty, yet should you in any way connect yourself with a government like that of the Medici, you come to be ill-thought of and ill-liked by the people. Such disfavour you should as far as possible avoid on account of the many inconveniences it brings with it. Still I maintain that you ought not for this reason to withdraw altogether from such a connection,

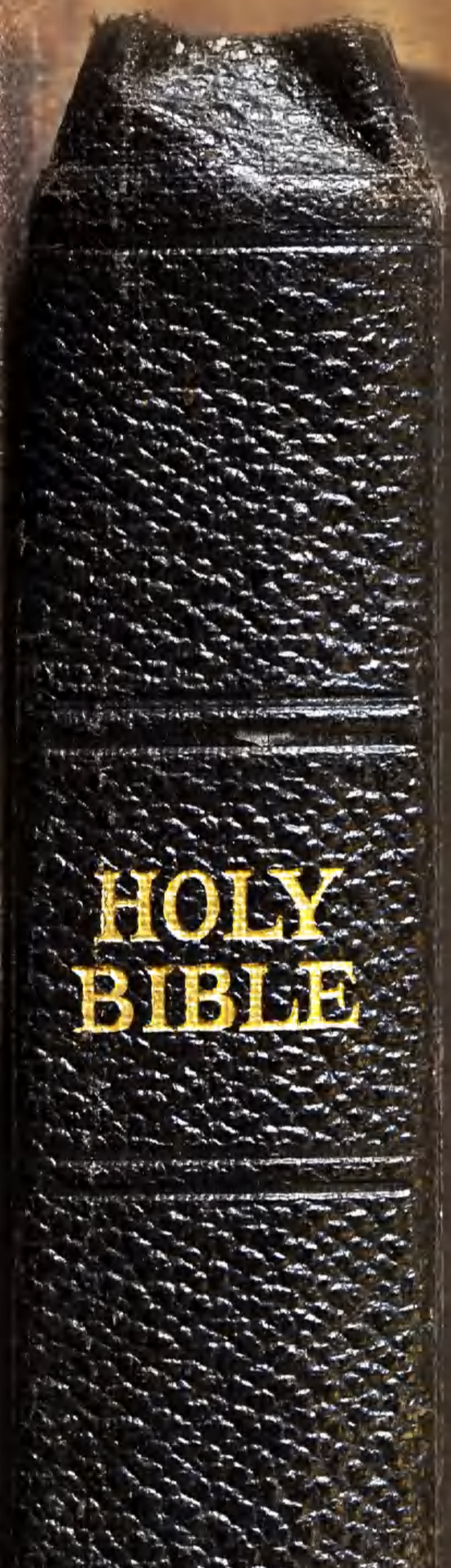
connection, or forego the benefits to be derived from it. For unless you have incurred a name for rapacity, or given offence to some powerful man or class of men, when the government is afterwards changed and the people relieved from the causes that made you obnoxious, your other offences will be purged, and your unpopularity in time wear off; nor will you be visited with that disgrace or ruin which at the first you may have feared. For all that, these are things that weigh with men, and sometimes lead them to make mistakes; and at any rate it cannot be denied that the person who has compromised himself by the like relations loses the clear reputation which another who stands clear of them will preserve.

359 Again I say that masters make little account of their servants, and to secure any trifling end of their own are ready to drag them through the dirt. Wherefore those servants are wise who do the like by their masters, so long as they do nothing contrary to integrity or honour.

360 He who knows himself to be the favourite of fortune may join in any enterprise with greater audacity. But it should be remembered that

not

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is slower than ours, nay, from their nature so slow, that though they move, we often cannot detect their motion. For which reason the judgments we form concerning them are often false.

363 Were wealth sought after for no other end than that it might be enjoyed, the desire for it would be the stamp of a base and ignoble mind. But this life of ours being so corrupt as it is, he who seeks reputation is forced to desire wealth; for through it those virtues shine and are held in price which in a poor man are little known and lightly esteemed.

364 I know not whether he is to be called fortunate to whom a great opportunity presents itself once only; since unless he be extremely prudent he will not know to turn it to account. But he assuredly must be thought most fortunate to whom the same great opportunity offers itself twice; for he were indeed a fool if he knew not how to use it the second time. On a second occasion, therefore, everything is to be ascribed to fortune; on a first, prudence also has a part.

365 In a commonwealth liberty is but the hand-

maiden of justice, being established for no other end than that one man may not be oppressed by another. And could we be sure that justice would be administered under the government of one or of a few, we should have no great cause to regret the absence of liberty. And this is the reason why the wise men and philosophers of antiquity did not commend free governments beyond others, but preferred those that provided best for the maintenance of the laws and of justice.

366 When tidings brought me on doubtful authority have in themselves an air of truth, or are such as might reasonably be looked for, I yield them scant credit. For men easily invent what is credible or is expected. I listen more readily when the news is out of the common and such as none foresaw; since it is unlikely that any one should invent or ask belief for what no one thinks of. And of this I have often had experience.

367 How lucky are the astrologers! For although their art, whether from its own imperfections or from the shortcomings of those who practise it, be a vain thing, they obtain more credit from one

one prediction that comes true than they lose by a hundred that turn out false; whereas with other men, to be found out in a single lie destroys confidence in them even when they speak the truth. This comes from the great eagerness men have to know the future; for lacking other means for obtaining such knowledge, they yield a ready belief to any one who pretends he can impart it, as the sick man trusts the physician who promises him health.

368 Pray God you be not found on the losing side; for however blameless you may be, you will always incur discredit. Nor can you go about through all the streets and market-places trying to clear yourself. On the other hand, he who has taken the winning side will always obtain praise, however little he deserves it.

369 In private affairs it is, as every one knows, an advantage to have possession, though the legal right is not thereby altered, and the procedure of the courts and the means for obtaining redress are fixed and settled. But in matters depending upon public policy or on the will of those who rule, the advantage is

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a tyranny is never altogether secure
freedom unless it exterminates the whol
and seed of the tyrant. I say this abs
and without reserve of the male offspri
regards the female, I distinguish, in res
circumstances, and in respect of the ch
of the women themselves, and of their ci

372 I have said already that governments
be made secure by cutting off heads, si
effect of this, as is told of Hydra, is r
multiply enemies. Yet there are many i
of governments being cemented with l
houses with lime. No rule can be g
distinguishing these contrary cases. Th
be left to the sagacity and discernmen
who has to act.

373 We cannot all have the station or
ment we covet, but commonly must
ourselves with what fate has throw
way, or what conforms to the con
which we are born. True merit, ac
lies in doing what we have to do wi
befits our means; as in a play, he
applauded who acts well the part of
than he who wears the robes of a

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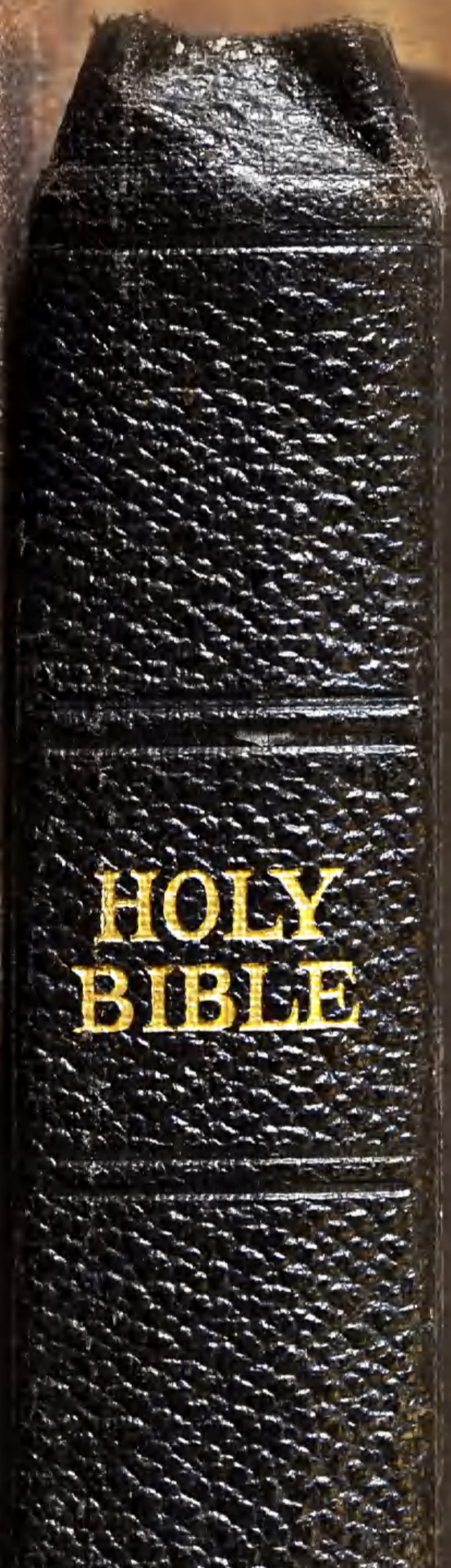
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ness, have now more difficulty to retain their hold on the government of Florence than their ancestors, though only private citizens, had to gain it. And this because the city had not then tasted the sweets of liberty and popular institutions, but, on the contrary, had always been in the power of a few; so that he who ruled the state never had the whole people for his enemies, since it mattered little to them whether they saw the government in one man's hand or in another's. But the memory of the popular government, which lasted from 1494 to 1512, is so rooted in the hearts of the Florentines, that save those few who hope under a despotism to have advantages over others, all are hostile to him who is master of the state, thinking his authority to be unjustly taken from them.

377 Let no man scheme to make himself supreme in Florence who is not of the line of the Medici and backed besides by the power of the Church. None else, be he who he may, has such influence or following that he can hope to reach this height, unless indeed he be carried to it by the free voice of the people in search of a constitutional chief; as happened to Piero Soderini. If any therefore aspire to such honours, not being of

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380 I would be ready enough to labour for changes in a government that I disliked could I hope to effect them by myself alone. But when I remember that I must combine with others, and for the most part with fools or knaves, who neither know how to be silent nor how to act, nothing disgusts me more than to think of changes.

381 No two men could have been more unlike in character than the Popes Julius and Clement. For while the former was of great and even excessive courage, ardent, impulsive, frank, and open, the latter was of a temper inclining rather to timidity, most patient, moderate, and withal deceitful. And yet from natures so opposite the same results, in the shape of great achievements, could be looked for. Because in the hands of great masters patience and impetuosity are alike fitted to effect important ends; the one operating by a sudden onslaught, breaking down all opposition; the other seeking to wear out by delay and to conquer with the aid of time and opportunity. So that where the one hinders, the other helps, and conversely. But were it possible for a man to combine the two natures, he would indeed be divine. As this, however, can hardly happen, I believe that, all things considered,

sidered, greater results are to be obtained by moderation and patience than by impetuosity and daring.

382 Although we act on the best advice, yet, so uncertain is the future, the results are often contrary. Still we are not on that account to give ourselves up like beasts a prey to Fortune, but like men to walk by Reason. And he who is truly wise should be better pleased to have been guided by good advice though the result be untoward, than to have prospered in following evil counsel.

383 Whoso in Florence would be well liked by the people, must avoid a name for ambition, nor betray, even in the most trivial matters of everyday life, any desire to appear greater, grander, or more refined than his fellows. For in a city which has its foundation in equality, and brims over with jealousy, every man must needs be odious who is suspected of wishing to stand on a different level from the rest, or to deviate from the common mode of living.

384 In the matter of economy, the main point, no doubt, is to retrench all superfluous outlay. Still it

it seems to me that much shrewdness may be shown in getting greater advantages than others at the same cost, and, as is vulgarly said, making your groat go as far as another man's sixpence.

385 Remember that although the man who is earning money may well spend something more than he who earns none, still it were folly to spend largely on the strength of your earnings if you have not first laid by a fair amount of capital. Opportunity for earning does not last for ever; and if while it does last you do not make the most of it, you will find yourself when it is over as poor as you were at first, besides having lost time and credit as well. For he cannot but be thought to lack sense who, having had a fair chance, has not known how to turn it to account. Bear the warning in mind, for within my own experience I have seen this mistake constantly made.

386 My father used to say, "A ducat in your purse brings you more credit than ten spent;" a maxim to be remembered not as an excuse for being penurious or for falling short in any honourable or reasonable outlay, but as a check on needless extravagance.

It

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cheap that, like Francesco Vettori, he should give his daughters away to the first who asks for them. In short, it is a matter which demands great prudence; and I may say for myself that I am more certain what ought to be done, than that when the occasion comes I shall know how to do it.

389 'Tis certain that services rendered to a people or corporate society are less considered than those rendered to individual men; for as they concern all collectively, none thinks himself specially obliged. He, therefore, who labours for a community or people, must not expect them to put themselves about for him in any danger or distress into which he may fall; or that for his sake, or out of gratitude for his services, they will forego their own advantage. For all that, you are not to think so disdainfully of conferring benefits upon a people as to neglect opportunities for doing so. For in this way you come to be well thought of, and to enjoy a good name, and this in itself is an ample return for your pains. Moreover, occasions may come in which the memory of your benefits will stand you in stead, and kindle those on whom they have been bestowed, at least if they have not become

become corrupted, to some feeling of gratitude, though less ardent than would be felt by an individual; and there are so many whom this light impression may touch, that sometimes, putting it altogether, the gratitude of a people is astonishing.

390 The return we reap from generous actions is not always manifest. Wherefore he who is not content to do good merely for its own sake will often leave off doing it, thinking he wastes his time. But in so thinking he makes no small mistake. For to do what is praiseworthy, if it bring you no other patent advantage, at least spreads your reputation and good name, and this is often and in many ways of incredible service to you.

391 The governor of a town threatened with attack or siege should trust most to those methods of defence which interpose delay; and even when he has no sure hope of success, should welcome every expedient that will cause the enemy to lose were it ever so little time. For often a day's or even an hour's respite may bring about deliverance.

392 If on the happening of any particular event you

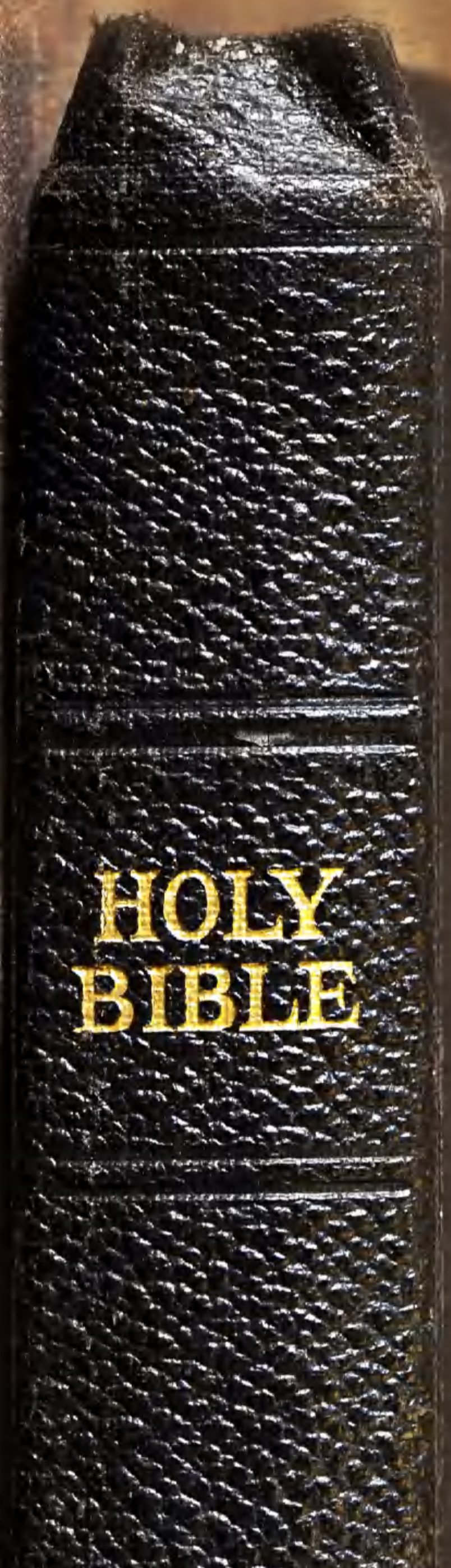
you were to get some wise man to say what results he thought likely to follow, and were to write down his forecast, you would find when after a time you turned to look at it, that as little of his prediction had come true as might be the case at the year's end in regard to the prophecies of the astrologers. And this from the extreme uncertainty of human affairs.

393 In matters of moment no one can form a sound opinion who is not well informed of all particulars. For often some perfectly trifling circumstance will alter the whole case. And yet I have frequently seen the same man draw right conclusions in matters whereof he knew only the general bearings, and judge less correctly when all particulars were supplied him. For unless you have a very clear head, and one wholly free from passion, you are likely enough to waver or grow confused when many particulars are laid before you.

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394 In reasoning about the future it is dangerous to proceed by drawing distinctions; as that either

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likely are you to fall into the extreme you would avoid, from not knowing how to halt at the just mean. Thus it is that popular governments, when to escape tyranny they betake themselves to licence, only get the deeper involved. Our friends in Florence have not yet learned this elementary lesson.

398 It is of ancient wont in Florence that when any law or other matter displeases us, we seek a remedy in enacting the express contrary; wherein finding afterwards other defects—since all extremes are faulty—we are constrained to frame further laws and ordinances. One reason, therefore, why we are always passing new laws is, that we seek rather how we may flee present ills than how we may correct them.

399 How falsely they speak who are continually declaring that had this been so, or that been otherwise, this or the other result had followed. For could the truth be known, it would be seen that, for the most part, the very same results would have followed, even had the circumstances been present which it is believed would have altered them.

400 When bad or ignorant men govern, it is no wonder

wonder that goodness and worth are little prized. For bad men hold them in abhorrence, and ignorant men do not recognise them.

401 Provided he be no contemner of religion or sound morals, the man who is zealous for the welfare of his country, and opposed to whatever tends to the injury of others, is a sufficiently good citizen. The superabundant goodness of our friends at St. Mark's is often hypocrisy ; but assuming it to be sincere, though it be not excessive in a Christian, it contributes nothing to the well-being of the state.

402 It was a mistake on the part of the Medici that in many respects they sought to conduct their government in accordance with popular principles ; for instance, in enlarging the number of those eligible for office, in allowing every man a share in public business, and the like. For whereas a close government could be maintained in Florence only by the zealous support of a few, the methods I speak of neither gained for this family the favour of the people at large, nor made the few their partisans. The popular government will be guilty of a like error should it seek to conform in many particulars with

with the usages of a close government, and more especially if it should exclude any section of the citizens; for free institutions cannot be maintained unless they give content to all. Accordingly a free government cannot imitate a close government in everything; and it were madness to imitate it in what makes it hateful, and not in what makes it strong.

403 *O ingenia magis acria quam matura*, said Petrarch of the Florentine intellect; and with truth. For it is our characteristic quality to be quick and subtle rather than grave and mature.

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NOTES.

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1. The siege of Florence by the united forces of Pope Clement VII. and the Emperor Charles V., which Guicciardini here refers to as having at the time he wrote lasted for seven months, began in October 1529, and did not terminate till the end of August 1530. This Reflection therefore was probably written in May or June 1530. The reference to the continued resistance of the Florentines in No. 136, and to the embassies of Carducci and others in No. 171, show that the whole series of Reflections, as far as the last-named number, must have been written or transcribed by Guicciardini in 1530 during the siege. From April to August 1530 the author was in Rome; see letter dated April 25, 1530, to his brother Jacopo, Op. Ined. x. 149, and subsequent letters to his brother Luigi, Op. Ined. ix. 148–156.

2. Cf. No. 246.

4. Cf. Nos. 291, 359.

5. Cf. Nos. 261–262. As to *hope* being a stronger stimulus than *fear*, cf. No. 62.

6. Cf. Nos. 117, 257, 343.

7–8. Cf. No. 310.

9. Cf. No. 322.

10. Cf. Nos. 292–293.

11. Cf. Nos. 265, 390.

13. Cf. No. 300. I do not find any such conversation recorded by Tacitus.

NO.

14. Cf. No. 266.

15 16. Cf. Nos. 281–282; and see the Meditation (dated September 1527, at Finocchieto, "*tempore pestis*") printed in the *Ricordi Autobiografici*, Op. Ined. x. 125–126, where the same reflections occur in nearly identical terms. See also *Ist. d'Italia*, Book viii. (vol. ii. p. 227): "Nelle cose che dopo lungo desiderio si ottengono, non trovano quasi mai gli uomini nè la giocondità nè la felicità che prima si avevano immaginata."

17. Cf. No. 279. This Reflection also will be found in the Meditation referred to in the preceding note. Op. Ined. x. 121.

18. Cf. No. 301.

19. Cf. No. 380.

20. Cf. No. 277; and see Machiavelli, *Discorsi*, iii. 6.

21. Cf. No. 402, and see Nos. 38, 376. As to the necessity for a partisan government being adopted by the Medici, see *Discorso quarto intorno alle mutazioni e riforme*, Op. Ined. ii. 316–324.

22. Cf. Nos. 215, 284, 399; and see *Ist. d'Italia*, Book ix. (vol. ii. p. 330): "Sarebbe per avventura minore spesso l'autorità di quegli che riprendono le cose infelicemente succedute, se nel tempo medesimo si potesse sapere quel che sarebbe accaduto, se si fosse proceduto diversamente," &c.

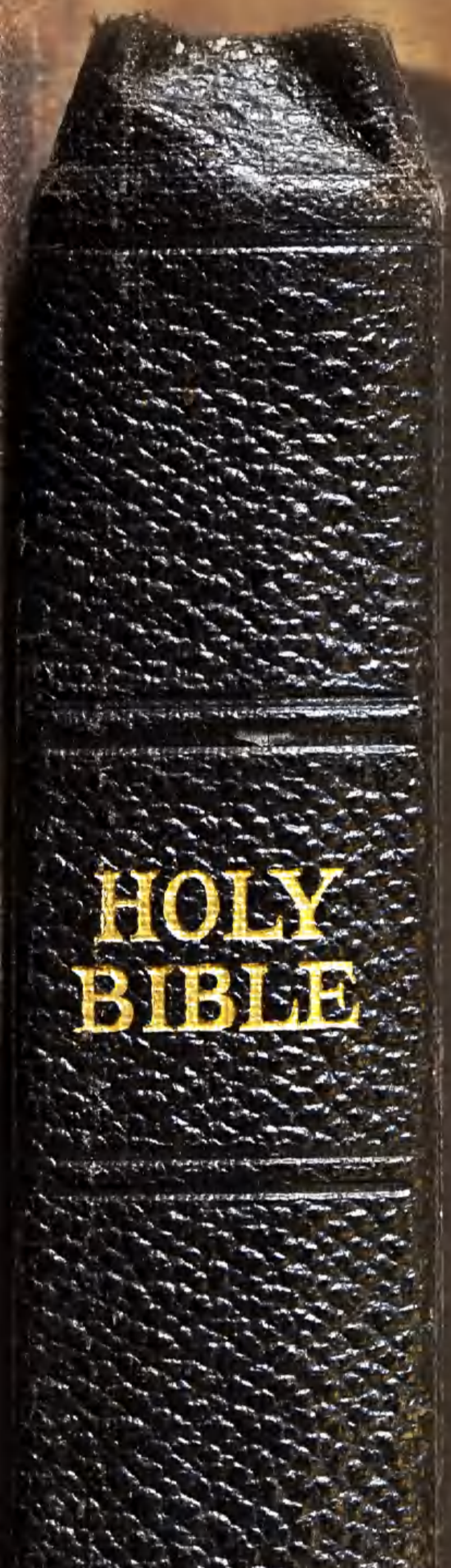
23. Cf. Nos. 114, 318, 392; the Reflection occurs in the Dialogue *Del Reggimento di Firenze*, Op. Ined. ii. 208; and again in the *Ist. d'Italia*, Book iv. (vol. i. p. 342), in the speech assigned to Antonio Grimani.

24-25. Cf. Nos. 27, 255, 263, 264; and see speech ascribed to the Duke of Alva, *Ist. d'Italia*, Book xvi. (vol. iv. p. 28).

26. Cf. No. 308.

27. Cf. No. 24 and *note*.

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39. Cf. No. 288. Piero Guicciardini, the author's father, had five sons and six daughters, Op. Ined. x. 71. In the *Ricordi Autobiografici*, Op. Ined. x. 90, Guicciardini conjectures that his father's death was hastened by the vexation caused him by the debts and embarrassments of his eldest son, Luigi.

40. Cf. No. 296.

41. Cf. No. 307; and see *Considerazioni sui Discorsi del Machiavelli*, Op. Ined. i. 75.

42. Cf. Nos. 217, 396.

43. Cf. No. 340.

44. Cf. No. 224. Opposed to the opinion put forward by Machiavelli, *Principe*, cap. 18, that it may be better to seem than to be good.

45. Cf. No. 386. A saying cited by Gio. Rucellai in his *Zibaldone*: "Disse un nostro cittadino che trovava che gli aveva fatto piu onore un denaro risparmiato che cento spesi."

46. Cf. No. 260; and see *Del Reggimento di Firenze*, Op. Ined. ii. 77: "A conservare bene la giustizia basterebbe assai, da quelli in fuora che sono molto atroci, che i delitti fussino puniti a 12 soldi per lira, pure che fussino puniti tutti."

47. Cf. No. 313.

48. Cf. No. 317; and see *Del Reggimento di Firenze*, Op. Ined. ii. 211, where the same reflection is expressed in almost identical language. With the view of Guicciardini that States cannot be governed in accordance with the moral law, compare the saying of Cosimo de' Medici, "Gli Stati non si tengono con i paternostri in mano," and the saying of Gino Capponi that for "the 'Ten of the War' such men only should be chosen as loved their country more than their souls."

NO.

49. Cf. Nos. 88, 270.

50. Cf. No. 276, where, however, other names are cited. "*John of Poppi*" having acquired, while employed in some subordinate capacity in the Chancery of 'The Ten,' an intimate knowledge of official business, was taken into their service by the Medicean rulers as a useful instrument of their Government. Nardi, *Hist. di Firenze*, ed. Le Monnier, vol. ii. p. 60. In 1517 he was secretary to Lorenzo di Piero de' Medici. *Ist. d'Italia*, Book xiii. (vol. iii. p. 210). He is frequently referred to in the correspondence connected with Guicciardini's *Legazione dell' Emilia*, Op. Ined. vol. vii.

51. Cf. No. 275.

52–53. Cf. Nos. 348–349. Corbinelli, in a supplementary note to No. 21 of his Collection, relates, on the authority of M. Isidoro Ruberti, secretary to the Nuncio at the French Court, that Cardinal Colonna, being denied by Pope Clement VII. certain favours he had asked of him, upbraided his Holiness with having been made Pope through his efforts. Whereupon Clement answered that what he said was true; but he prayed him to leave him Pope, and not himself usurp the functions; otherwise he would be taking from him what he had before given.

54. Cf. No. 391. The proverb "Time is life" (*chi ha tempo ha vita*) is quoted in the *Discorsi Politici*, Op. Ined. i. 313.

55. Cf. No. 278.

56. Cf. No. 384. The Florentine *Grosso* or *Grossone* was properly equivalent to twenty-one *Quattrini* only.

57. Cf. No. 367.

59. As to the timidity of Pope Clement, see also Nos. 194, 381; and compare *Ist. d'Italia*, Book xvi.

NO.

(vol. iv. p. 69): "Nè avendo, per la memoria di avere temuto molte volte vanamente, preso esperienza, di non si lasciare sopraffare al timore."

60. Cf. No. 337.

61. Cf. No. 299.

62. As to what measures find favour with popular governments, see Machiavelli, *Discorsi*, i. 53.

63. Cf. No. 285.

64. These remarks on the change in methods of warfare are repeated and expanded in the *Ist. d'Italia*, Book xv. (vol. iii. p. 422), in connection with the death of Prospero Colonna, which took place in the year 1523.

66. Cf. No. 328, and see *Del Reggimento di Firenze*, Op. Ined. ii. 55: "Se questi che predicano la libertà credessino in uno Stato stretto avere per particulare suo migliore condizione che in uno libero, ne resterebbe pochi che non vi corressino per le poste."

67. Cf. No. 344.

68. Cf. Nos. 237–238, and see *Del Reggimento di Firenze*, Op. Ined. ii. 87–89, where the subject of neutrality in war is treated in nearly identical terms. See also *Ist. d'Italia*, Book x. (vol. ii. p. 428): "La neutralità nelle guerre degli altri essere cosa laudabile," &c.; and again *Ist. d'Italia*, Book xi. (vol. iii. pp. 13–14). The author had studied the observations of Machiavelli, *Principe*, cap. 21; *Discorsi*, i. 38; ii. 15.

69. Cf. No. 338.

70. Cf. No. 283.

71. Cf. No. 34 and *note*.

72. Cf. No. 256.

73. See speech ascribed to the Duke of Alva, *Ist. d'Italia*, Book xvi. (vol. iv. p. 30): "Così l'usarono Alessandro e Cesare che furono liberali a perdonare le ingiurie, non inconsiderati," &c.

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80. Cf. No. 364.

81. "It is good to guard adventures with certainties that may uphold losses."—Bacon's Essays. "*Of Riches.*"

82. Cf. No. 247.

83. Cf. No. 297.

84. Cf. No. 321. In the counsels left by Gino di Neri Capponi for the guidance of his son he says, that "he who would attain to a great position in his native city must not leave it too often, nor for any but important affairs."

85. Cf. No. 360.

86. Cf. No. 352 and *note*.

87. Cf. No. 295.

88. Cf. Nos. 49, 270.

89. Cf. 366.

90. Other counsels to courtiers are given in Nos. 94, 195, 356, 370.

91. Cf. No. 329.

92. Cf. No. 147; and see *Ist. d'Italia*, Book vi. (vol. ii. p. 21), where, moralising on the death of Pope Alexander VI., Guicciardini observes that though stained with every vice he had always prospered: "esempio potente a confondere l'arroganza di coloro i quali presumendosi di scorgere con la debolezza degli occhi umani la profondità dei giudizi divini, affermano che ciò che di prospero o d' avverso avviene agli uomini procede o dai meriti o dai demeriti loro."

93. Cf. No. 316. The Duke of Ferrara referred to was Alfonso I. d'Este, who died in 1534. In the *Ist. d'Italia*, Book xiii. (vol. iii. p. 270) Guicciardini again says of him that in many respects he was more of a merchant than a prince.

94. Cf. No. 84, and see No. 90 and *note*.

95. Cf. No. 311, and see No. 347. Writing of the

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assault of Parma by the French troops on the 21st December 1521, Guicciardini says, "Si misono con tanto impeto in luogo, che non so se questa si debba chiamare animosità o bestialità." Op. Ined. vii. 380.

96. Cf. No. 312, and see *Ist. d'Italia*, Book iii. (vol. i. p. 237), the speech assigned to the Doge Agostino Barbarico, in which the same topic is similarly treated. See also No. 116.

97. Cf. No. 252. Giulio de' Medici was created Pope on the 19th November 1523, when he assumed the title of Clement VII. Ferrante Francesco d'Avalos, Marquis of Pescara, husband of the celebrated poetess Vittoria Colonna, served with distinction in the Italian wars of the Emperor Charles V. His reputation was obscured by his connection with the intrigues of Girolamo Morone. He died in 1525. The Reflection is repeated nearly verbatim in the *Ist. d'Italia*, Book v. (vol. i. p. 456): "L'esperienza dimostra essere verissimo che rare volte succede quel che è desiderato da molti; perchè dependendo communemente gli effetti delle azioni umane dalla volontà de' pochi, ed essendo l'intenzione e i fini di questi quasi sempre diversi dalla intenzione e da' fini de' molti, possono difficilmente succedere le cose altrimenti che secondo l'intenzione di coloro che danno loro il moto."

98-99. Cf. Nos. 130, 304. See also *Del Reggimento di Firenze*, Op. Ined. ii. 61: "Vi dico essere vero che uno che ha lo Stato in mano ha rispetto di non fare alcuno sì grande che gli possa portare pericolo, e più teme da' valenti uomini che dagli altri, perchè sono atti a maggiori cose; nondimeno, se è prudente, si governa con modo e con distinzione, facendo differenza da uno che è savio

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e non animoso, e uno che è savio, animoso, e non inquieto, e da questi a chi ha ingegno, e animo, e inquietudine; co' primi procederà largamente; co' secondi bene, con qualche rispetto più; co' terzi andrà più stretto."

100. Cf. No. 305. Machiavelli, *Discorsi*, iii. 2, declares the course here recommended to be impracticable.

101. Cf. No. 304.

102. Cf. Nos. 54, 391.

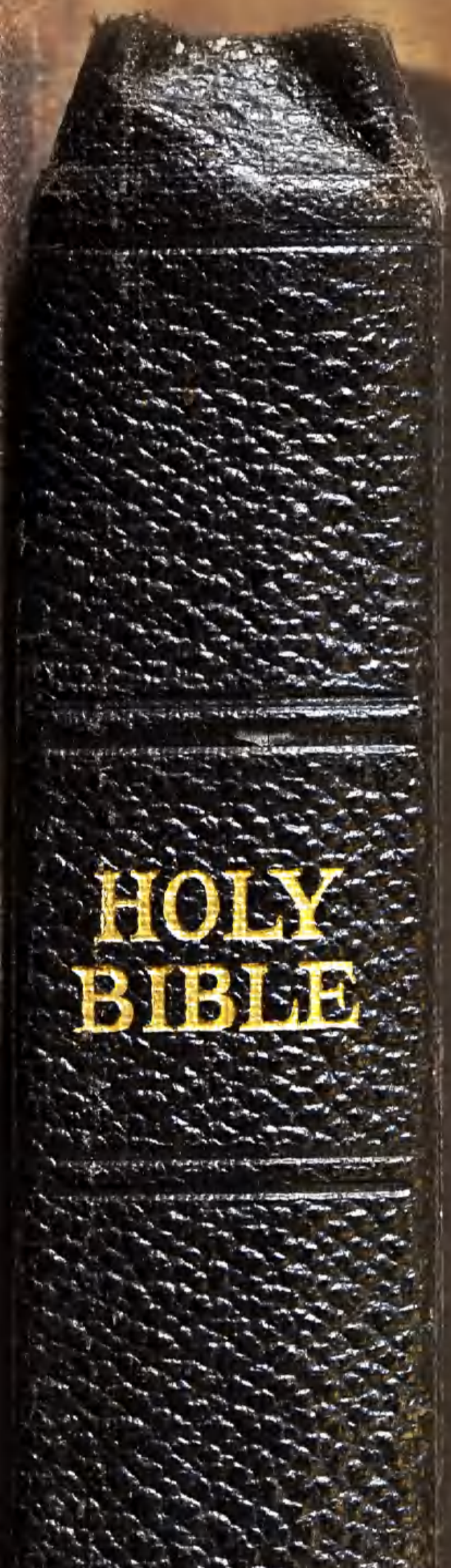
103. Cf. Nos. 303, 326.

104. Cf. Nos. 267–268, and see Machiavelli, *Principe*, cap. 18. See also Bacon's Essays. "*Of Simulation and Dissimulation.*" In the *Ist. d'Italia*, Book vi. (vol. ii. p. 32), the author cites Pope Julius II. as having followed the methods here recommended, to enable him to obtain the Popedom.

105. In the *Ist. d Italia*, Book iv. (vol. i. p. 359), Guicciardini, however, says that when once a man has got a name for deceiving, no one will trust him; and in Book xi. (vol. iii. p. 49) that we can neither excuse nor pity the man who, having once been deceived by another, afterwards gives him his confidence. By "*the Catholic King*" is here meant Ferdinand of Aragon, to whose character for dissimulation Machiavelli also refers, *Principe*, cap. 18, without naming him.

106. Cf. No. 388. The anxieties of the Florentine father of daughters had long before been touched upon by Dante, *Par.* xv. 103–105. By his wife, Maria Salviati, Guicciardini had five children, all of them daughters: *Romola Simona*, who died in infancy; *Margherita Simona*, born 14th April 1512, during her father's absence on his Spanish embassy; *Lucrezia*, born 1514, died 1527; *Laodamia*, married to Pandolfo Pucci who was

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Ined. x. 104–105, in reciting the various disadvantages attending his loss of the governorship of the Romagna, Guicciardini refers to the difficulties he must now have in obtaining suitable matches for his daughters.

107. Cf. Machiavelli, *Discorsi*, ii. 2: "Di tutte le servitù dure quella è durissima che ti sottomette ad una repubblica . . . perchè il fine della repubblica è enervare ed indebolire, per accrescere il corpo suo, tutti gli altri corpi. Il che non fa un principe che ti sottometta," &c. In the *Considerazioni sui Discorsi del Machiavelli*, Op. Ined. i. 28, Guicciardini speculates as to whether, on the whole, it might not have been for the advantage of Italy to have fallen under the government of a sole monarch: "Essendo il costume delle repubbliche non partecipare e frutti della sua libertà e imperio a altri che a' suoi cittadini proprii."

108. Cf. No. 374.

109. Cf. No. 365 and *note*. In the *Del Reggimento di Firenze*, Op. Ined. ii. 25, Bernardo del Nero is made to say: "Chi introdusse le libertà non ebbe per suo fine che ognuno si intromettessi nel governare; ma lo intento suo fu perchè si conservassino le leggi e il bene commune, il quale, quando uno governa bene, si conserva meglio sotto lui che in altro governo."

110. This may be meant as a protest against Machiavelli's inferences from Roman examples.

111–112. Cf. *Del Reggimento di Firenze*, Op. Ined. ii. 86: "Se mettete insieme otto o dieci savii, nasce qualche volta tra loro tale varietà che saranno giudicati pazzi." &c. "*Antonio of Venafra*," minister to Pandolfo Petrucci, Lord of Siena, is much commended by Machiavelli in the *Principe*, cap. 22.

NO.

113. Cf. No. 290.

114. Cf. No. 392.

115. The *Monte* was the consolidated Public Debt of Florence. As to its origin and character, see Cronica di *Matteo Villani*, Book iii. cap. 106; and *Varchi*, Storia Fiorentina, T. iii. 33–34. In the year 1511 more than a third of the revenue of the State went to pay the interest on the public debt. Op. Ined. ii. 265, *note*.

116. Cf. No. 96 and *note*.

117. Cf. Nos. 6, 110. "È senza dubbio molto periculoso il governarsi con gli esempi, se non concorrono non solo in generale ma in tutti i particolari le medesime ragioni." *Ist. d'Italia*, Book i. (vol. i. p. 87).

118. Cf. No. 327, and see Nos. 32, 223. "Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise."

119. Cf. No. 387.

120. Cf. No. 244.

121. Cf. No. 378.

122. "Compound for sins they are inclined to
By damning those they have no mind to."

123. "*So that it may not be amiss*," &c. Compare No. 211, at the end.

124. "*And yet perhaps*," &c. See Machiavelli, *Discorsi*, i. 12.

126. Cf. No. 213: "*To reckon the least evil as a good.*" Machiavelli, *Principe*, cap. 21. See too *Ist. d'Italia*, Book ii. (vol. i. pp. 207–208), and Book xii. (vol. iii. p. 112).

127. Cf. No. 250.

128. Cf. Nos. 151, 319. See also *Discorsi Politici*, Op. Ined. i. 231: "Chi ha a fare pronostico delle deliberazioni di altri, non debbe tanto andare con la misura di quello che ragionevolmente doverebbe fare uno savio, quanto con la misura

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del cervello, natura, e altre condizioni di chi ha a deliberare; e chi procede altrimenti spesso si inganna." And see the speech put into the mouth of Niccolò Foscarini, *Ist. d'Italia*, Book vii. (vol. ii. p. 150). In the *Advancement of Learning*, Lord Bacon relates, "It was both pleasantly and wisely said, though I think very untruly, by a Nuncio of the Pope returning from a certain nation where he had served as lidger, whose opinion being asked touching the appointment of one to go in his place, he wished that in any case they did not send one that was too wise, because no very wise man would ever imagine what they in that country were like to do."

129. Cf. No. 350.

130. Cf. No. 98 and *note*.

131. Cf. No. 306, and see *Considerazioni sui Discorsi del Machiavelli*, Op. Ined. i. 35: "Chi è disperato non aspetta le occasioni, ma le cerca," &c.

133. Cf. No. 324.

134-135. Cf. Nos. 225-226, and see *Del Reggimento di Firenze*, Op. Ined. ii. 74-75, where the same observations occur in nearly the same words: "Io vi dico che per natura tutti gli uomini sono inclinati al bene," &c.

136. Cf. No. 1 and *note*. The allusion to the successful resistance made by the Florentines up to the time when this Reflection was written, is of importance as fixing the date when the whole of the foregoing Reflections must have been entered by Guicciardini in his commonplace book.

138. Cf. No. 302. The quotation is from Seneca, *Epist.* 107. In the *Ist. d'Italia*, Book xvi. (vol. iv. p. 57) the idea is paraphrased: "Non è cosa alcuna più difficile a schifare che il Fato, nessuno rimedio è contra i mali determinati."

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manuscript the author had here written: *La anduta nostra a Cremona.* The reference is to the siege of Cremona by the joint forces of the Pope and the Venetians in 1526. Owing to inadequate preparations on the part of the assailants, the town was able to hold out for nearly two months. See the letters of Guicciardini in *La Luogotenenza Generale*, Op. Ined. iv. pp. 143–413 *passim.*

149. This Reflection probably relates to the campaign referred to in the preceding note.

150. Here again Canestrini tells us that the author had noted on the margin: *Duca di Urbino.* Francesco Maria della Rovere, Duke of Urbino, who commanded the Venetian contingent in the campaign of 1526, had an old score to settle with the Church, and was believed by Guicciardini to have shown remissness, if not treachery, in his conduct of the war. Compare *Ist. d'Italia*, Book xvi. (vol. iv. p. 20), where the reference is to the Duke of Ferrara. The Reflection had been made before by Machiavelli, *Discorsi*, iii. 17.

151. Cf. No. 128 and *note.*

153. Cf. *Discorsi Politici*, Op. Ined. i. 299: "È più da temere che uno imbasciadore che è appresso a uno principe, gli creda e favorisca le cose sue più che il debito, che le diminuisca o le abbatta."

155. Cf. No. 393, and see *Considerazioni sui Discorsi del Machiavelli*, Op. Ined. i. 52.

156. In the *Ist. d'Italia*, Book xvi. (vol. iv. p. 69), where he contrasts the characters of the Popes Leo and Clement, he says of the latter what he here says of himself: "Parendogli sempre poichè aveva deliberato che il consiglio stato rifiutato da lui fosse migliore; perchè rappresentandosegli allora innanzi solamente queste ragioni che erano state

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neglette da lui, non rivocava nel suo discorso le ragioni che l'avevano mosso a eleggere," &c.

157. Cf. No. 201.

158. "*A good name is better than much riches*;" but compare No. 240, where he says that without riches a good name can hardly be preserved. See too No. 363.

162. Cf. No. 395.

163. Cf. No. 258. *ἀρχὴ ἄνδρα δείκνυσι.* The saying is quoted by Guicciardini in the concluding words of the *Istoria d'Italia*: "È verissimo e degno di somma laude quel proverbio che il Magistrato fa manifesto il valore di chi l'esercita."

164. Cf. *Ist. d'Italia*, Book xiv. (vol. iii. p. 284); "Non hanno gli uomini maggiore inimico che la troppa prosperità."

165. Cf. No. 355.

167. See speech given to the Duke of Alva, *Ist. d'Italia*, Book xvi. (vol. iv. p. 29): "Dov' è la leggierezza non è cognizione di virtù, non giudizio di discernere le azioni di altri, non gravità da misurare quello che convenga a se stesso."

168. Compare *Del Reggimento di Firenze*, Op. Ined. ii. 62: "Quello che si fa studiosamente suole avere peso e misura; ma la ignoranza è cieca, confusa, e sanza termine o regola; e però dice il proverbio, che spesso è meglio avere a fare col maligno che con lo ignorante."

169. Cf. No. 243.

171. In a note on this Reflection Canestrini suggests that the contempt expressed by Guicciardini for these Florentine envoys was inspired by his hatred of the free government established in Florence in 1527, by the party to which they belonged. But the terms in which these men are mentioned by Varchi, who was himself favourable to the Re-

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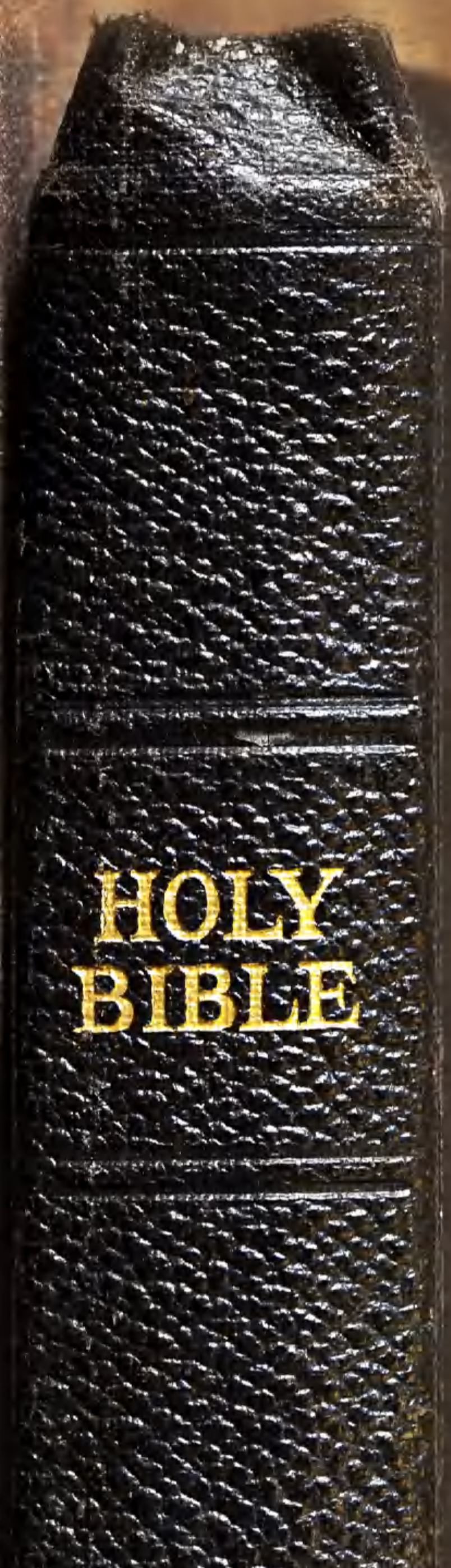
publican cause, show that Guicciardini's disdainful notice of them was not undeserved. *Baldassare Carducci*, being then over seventy years of age, went as ambassador to France in December 1528, where he died in August 1530. *Bartolommeo Gualterotti*, "uomo anzi buono e amorevole che avveduto e valente," was appointed ambassador to Venice in March 1529. *Bardo Altoviti*, "giovane tanto vano e ambizioso che niuna cosa era nè tanto buona nè così rea, che non la boria e vana gloria sua fatto fare non gli avessero," was appointed envoy to Siena in June 1529. *Galeotto Giugni*, "burbero e zotico di natura, e se non bizzarro, rotto e iroso molto," was appointed ambassador to Ferrara at the same time as Bardo Altoviti to Siena. As all these embassies terminated on the fall of the Florentine Republic, the reference to them as then existing, taken in connection with the dates supplied in Reflections Nos. 1 and 136, shows that the present Reflection also was written while the siege of Florence was still proceeding.

172. Cf. No. 314. "I governi non furono trovati per fare onore e utile a chi ha a governare, ma per benefizio di chi ha a essere governato." *Del Reggimento di Firenze*, Op. Ined. ii. 55.

173. Cf. Nos. 294, 315. The opinion that a prodigal is better liked by his subjects than a saving prince, is repeated, *Ist. d'Italia*, Book xii. (vol. iii. p. 182), where Guicciardini considers the character of Ferdinand the Catholic.

174–175. Cf. No. 259. "È impossibile che uno uomo qualificato possa riposare in una città dove il capo dello stato stretto non lo reputa amico; nè può difendersene col non travagliarsi, o col non lo offendere; perchè a ogni ora nascono infiniti

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NO.

199. Cf. No 37 and *note*.

201. Cf. No. 157.

202. Cf. No. 74. "Some, when they take revenge, are desirous the party should know whence it cometh. This is the more generous."—Bacon's Essays, "*Of Revenge*."

203. Cf. No. 335.

204. In the *Instructions* to his brother Jacopo when appointed to succeed him in the government of the Romagna, Guicciardini writes: "È fatica grande difendersi da' ladri, massime dai governatori e dai bargelli; i primi sono eccessivi nel pigliare le sportule e ne' pagamenti delle loro cancellerie; gli altri nelle catture ed esecuzioni sue." Op. Ined. viii. 408.

205. "*Twice I have held high command.*" On the first occasion in the year 1521 as commissary of the forces of Pope Leo X. co-operating with the Emperor Charles V. against the King of France. In the *Ist. d'Italia*, Book xiv. *passim*, Guicciardini blames the general-in-chief, Prospero Colonna, for his excessive slowness and caution in the conduct of this campaign. The second occasion on which Guicciardini held military command was in the campaign of 1526, referred to in No. 148 and *note*.

207. Cf. Nos. 57, 367.

209. Cf. No. 289.

211. "*Faculty of foretelling the future*," &c. The distinction between prediction of the future practised as an art, and prophecy under divine *afflatus*, is again noted. *Ist. d'Italia*, Book i. (vol. i. p. 67). "*Are secret powers of Nature*," &c. Compare concluding sentence of No. 123.

212. Cf. Nos. 109, 354. The Reflection is put into the mouth of Bernardo del Nero in the Dialogue

NO.

Del Reggimento di Firenze, Op. Ined. ii. 129-130: "Dopo il governo di uno è lodato in secondo luogo quello di pochi, quando sono i migliori, e però si chiamano Ottimati: governo che a giudicio mio in ogni luogo ha molte difficultà a essere buono, ma a Firenze sopra tutti li altri; perchè da una casa all' altra non è tanto eccesso, nè ci sono qualità sì rilevate, che questa distinzione possi farsi se non per forza," &c. To the same effect, see the speech assigned to Pagolantonio Soderini, *Ist. d'Italia*, Book ii. (vol. i. p. 130). But in the *Considerazioni sui Discorsi del Machiavelli*, Op. Ined. i. 16, Guicciardini says: "Quando fussi necessitato mettere in una città o uno governo meramente di nobili, o uno governo di plebe, crederò sia manco errore farlo di nobili. . . . E questa conclusione è secondo la sentenza di tutti quelli che hanno scritto delle republiche, che prepongono il governo degli ottimati a quello della moltitudine." And see *ibid.*, p. 55. In the *Storia Fiorentina*, T. i. 398, Varchi says of our author: "Egli arebbe voluto uno Stato col nome d'Ottimati, ma in fatti di pochi, nel quale larghissima parte, per le sue molte e rarissime qualità, meritissimamente gli si venìa." Compare Villari, *Machiavelli e suoi Tempi*, vol. ii. p. 256.

213. Cf. Nos. 126, 194.

215. Cf. Nos. 22, 284, 399.

216. Cf. No. 373, and see the Meditation printed in the *Ricordi Autobiografici*, Op. Ined. x. 128: "Dicono alcuni savi che la vita nostra è simile a una commedia, nella quale, a dare laude a coloro che vi recitano, non si attende tanto che persona ciascuno sostenga, quanto se porta bene la persona che ha."

NO.

217. Cf. Nos. 42, 396.

220. Cf. Nos. 330, 358 and *notes*; and see *Del Reggimento di Firenze*, Op. Ined. ii. 71: "Non mi pare già che se la mala fortuna loro o la disposizione de' cieli ha voluto che surga uno tiranno, che si debba dare nota di cattivo cittadino a quelli che, poi che il tiranno sanza opera loro è introdotto, si sforzano, non mutando costumi e non usando male la autorità che avessino, a avere luogo nello Stato stretto; e massime quelli che sono di qualche condizione, perchè se vogliono giocare al largo, vengono presto al sospetto di essere inimici dello Stato."

221. Machiavelli, *Discorsi*, ii. 25, has a similar remark as to the danger of attacking a city split into factions.

Here ends a series of Reflections which we may believe to have been written by Guicciardini at Rome in the year 1530, between the months of May and August. From an entry in the author's handwriting we learn that the Reflections which follow, as far as No. 393, were transcribed by him in the beginning of the year 1528, "*at a time when he had much leisure*," into a fresh note-book from other note-books written before 1525. Another entry, likewise in the author's handwriting, inserted in the manuscript between Nos. 393 and 394, informs us that this transcription had been interrupted, but was resumed in April 1528, when it is probable that the few remaining Reflections were added. The series of Reflections extending from No. 1 to No. 221 is consequently, contrary to the view taken by M. A.

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NO.

254. Cf. No. 401. "*It has been truly said*," &c. By Machiavelli, *Discorsi*, ii. 2. "One of the doctors of Italy, Nicholas Machiavel, had the confidence to put in writing, almost in plaine terms, that the Christian faith had given up good men in prey to those that are tyrannicall and unjust. Which he spake because, indeed, there was never law, or sect, or opinion did so much magnify goodness as the Christian religion doth. Therefore, to avoid the scandal and the danger both, it is good to take knowledge of the errours of a habit so excellent."—Bacon's Essays, "*Of Goodness and Goodness of Nature.*"

255. Cf. No. 27.

256. Cf. No. 72.

257. Cf. Nos. 6, 343.

258. Cf. No. 163 and *note*.

259. Cf. Nos. 174–175 and *note*.

260. Cf. No. 46 and *note*.

261–262. Cf. No. 5 and *note*.

263–264. Cf. Nos. 24–25 and *note*; and see Machiavelli, *Discorsi*, i. 29, citing Tacitus, *Hist.* iv. 2.;

265. Cf. Nos. 11, 390.

266. Cf. No. 14.

267–268. Cf. Nos. 104, 105 and *notes*.

269. Cf. No. 37 and *note*.

270. Cf. Nos. 49, 88.

271. See Machiavelli, *Discorsi*, iii. 6.

273. Cf. No. 77 and *note*.

274. Cf. Nos. 30-31 and *note*.

275. Cf. No. 51.

276. Cf. No. 50 and *note*. "*Messer Goro*." Goro Gheri da Pistoja is mentioned by Varchi as one of the agents employed by the Medici to carry on their government in Florence, and as greatly detested on account of his arrogance and rudeness.

NO.

Storia Fiorentina, T. i. 70. Many letters passing between Messer Goro and Guicciardini during the years 1516–1518, at the time when the latter was governor of the Emilian Province, are printed in the seventh volume of the *Opere Inedite*. In a letter to Jacopo Salviati, dated June 12, 1526, Op. Ined. iv. 46, Guicciardini writes: "Intendo che Messer Goro sta molto male: quando mancassi vi raccomando la cosa di *Messer Niccolò* secondo la fede che Luigi ed io abbiamo in voi." This "Messer Niccolò" may possibly have been Niccolò Machiavelli, for whom, in the previous year, Salviati had endeavoured to obtain employment from Pope Clement. See Villari, *N. Machiavelli e suoi Tempi*, iii. 324.

277. Cf. No. 20.

278. Cf. No. 55.

279. Cf. No. 17 and *note*.

281–282. Cf. Nos. 15–16 and *note*.

283. Cf. No. 70.

284. Cf. No. 22 and *note*.

285–286. Cf. Nos. 63, 160.

287. Cf. No. 33.

288. Cf. No. 39.

289. Cf. No. 209.

290. Cf. Nos. 113.

291. Cf. Nos. 4, 359.

292–293. Cf. No. 10.

294. Cf. No. 173, and see Machiavelli, *Principe*, cap. 16.

295. Cf. No. 87.

296. Cf. No. 40.

297. Cf. No. 83.

298. Cf. No. 79.

299. Cf. No. 61.

300. Cf. No. 13 and *note*.

NO.

301. Cf. No. 18.

302. Cf. No. 138 and *note*.

303. Cf. No. 103.

304. Cf. Nos. 98–99 and *note*. See also No. 101.

305. Cf. No. 100 and *note*.

306. Cf. No. 131 and *note*.

307. Cf. No. 41 and *note*.

308. Cf. No. 26.

309. Cf. No. 36.

310. Cf. Nos. 7–8.

311. Cf. No. 95 and *note*.

312. Cf. No. 96 and *note*.

313. Cf. No. 47.

314. Cf. No. 172 and *note*.

315. Cf. No. 173 and *note*.

316. Cf. No. 93 and *note*.

317. Cf. No. 48 and *note*.

318. Cf. No. 23 and *note*.

319. Cf. No. 128 and *note*.

320. Cf. No. 145.

321. Cf. No. 84 and *note*. "*Di cosa nasce cosa*." The proverb is cited by Machiavelli, *Mandragola*, Act i. Sc. 1.

322. Cf. No. 9.

323. "Memoriæ proditur Tiberium quotiens curia egrederetur, Graecis verbis in hunc modum eloqui solitum: *O homines ad servitutem paratos!* Scilicet etiam illum qui libertatem publicam nollet, tam projectæ servientium patientiæ taedebat. Tacitus, *Ann.* iii. 65.

324. Cf. No. 133.

325. Cf. No. 34 and *note*.

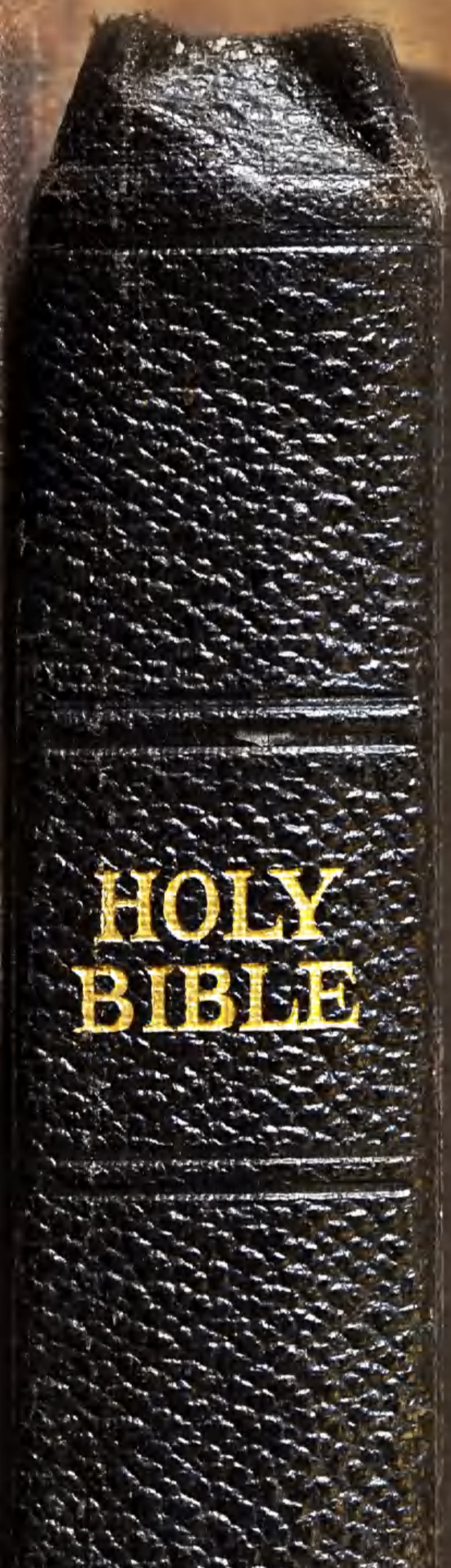
326. Cf. Nos. 103, 303.

327. Cf. No. 118 and *note*.

328. Cf. No. 66 and *note*.

329. Cf. No. 91.

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plots to deprive Duke Alfonso of his possessions, "or do worse by him if possible."

334. Similar advice is put into the mouth of Bernardo del Nero in the Dialogue *Del Reggimento di Firenze*, Op. Ined. ii. 221–222. Machiavelli, *Discorsi*, i. 52, defends Soderini for not taking advice of the kind. See also *Ist. d'Italia*, Book xi. (vol. iii. pp. 20–23), where the arguments for and against permitting the return of the Medici are discussed.

335. Cf. No. 203.

336. Cf. No. 76 and *note*.

337. Cf. No. 60.

338. Cf. No. 69.

339. Cf. No. 78 and *note*. According to Nardi, *Istoria di Firenze* (ed. Le Monnier), vol. ii. p. 61, Pope Clement, when Cardinal de' Medici, would often cite the saying of Piero Soderini: "Non essere sapiente se non il paziente, nè essere paziente se non il sapiente."

340. Cf. No. 43.

341. Cf. No. 46 and *note*. "Capo e fondamento di tutto il bene è l'avere nome e opinione di severità," &c.—*Istruzioni delle cose di Romagna*, Op. Ined. viii. 393.

342. Cf. No. 372. See also *Del Reggimento di Firenze*, Op. Ined. ii. 219-220: "Se tu tagli uno capo ancora che spenga lui, fai in luogo suo malcontenti molti; nè solo si fa inimici i suoi, ma ancora dispiace poi alla fine a tutti gli uomini di mezzo. Se mandi uno in esilio, accresci il numero di quegli che sempre cercano muovere umori contro alla città," &c.

343. Cf. Nos. 6, 117, 257.

344. Cf. No. 67.

345. Cf. No. 140.

NO.

346. Cf. No. 28.

347. Cf. No. 95 and *note*.

348 349. Cf. Nos. 52–53 and *note*. Machiavelli, *Principe*, cap. 3, lays it down as a general rule, which never or rarely errs, "Che chi è cagione che uno diventi potente, rovina: perchè quella potenza è causata da colui o con industria o con forza; e l'una e l'altra di queste due è sospetta a chi è divenuto potente." Commines, *Memoires*, iii. 12, relates a curious conversation which he had with King Louis XI. on this subject.

350. Cf. No. 129.

351. Cf. No. 144 and *note*.

352. Cf. No. 86, and see Bacon, *Advancement of Learning*. "Next to the well understanding and discerning of a man's self, there followeth the well opening and revealing a man's self; wherein we see nothing more usual than for the more able man to make the less show. . . . Ostentation, though it be to the first degree of vanity, seemeth to me rather a vice in manners than in policy."

353. Cf. No. 29 and *note*.

354. Cf. No. 212 and *note*. In the Djalogue *Del Reggimento di Firenze*, Op. Ined. ii. 17–18, Guicciardini's father Piero is made to say: "Potrei dire secondo i filosofi che il governo di uno quando è buono è il migliore di tutti; ma quando è cattivo è il peggiore. Credo ancora che più spesso si abbatta a essere cattivo il governo di uno che quello di molti, perchè ha più licenza e manco ostaculi. Però vorrei che i filosofi mi avessino dichiarato questo passo . . . quale fussi migliore sorte di una città che nascessi ora, e che si avessi a ordinare il governo suo, o che fussi ordinata in uno governo di uno, o in governo di molti."

NO.

"*Especially where it passes by inheritance.*" See Machiavelli, *Discorsi*, i. 11, where he cites Dante, *Purg.* vii. 121–123.

355. Cf. No. 165.

356. Cf. No. 94.

357. Omitted by Corbinelli, perhaps as reflecting on the clergy.

358. Cf. Nos. 220, 330 and *notes*. "*Still I maintain that you ought not for this reason.*" See the Meditation in the *Ricordi Autobiografici*, Op. Ined. x. 120: "Non voglio già durare la fatica medesima in persuaderti che il sospetto che ha il popolo di te per reputarti amico de' Medici, passerà; e che verrà tempo, forse più presto che tu non credi, che tu sarai in buono concetto e opinione. . . . Credo bene, anzi tengo per certo, che se la città arà vita e non affoghi in questa tempesta grande che ora si mostra, non passerà molto tempo che non solo non sarai rifiutato, ma che agli uomini parrà forse avere fatto perdita di non si essere valuti in tempi tanto strani della virtù ed esperienza tua."

359. Cf. Nos. 4, 291.

360. Cf. No. 85. The Reflection supplies the date at which it was originally written, namely, the 3rd February 1523 Florentine, 1524 common style, at which time Guicciardini was governing the Romagna for Pope Clement. "*Yet have not had the same success in commerce.*" An entry in the *Ricordi Autobiografici*, Op. Ined. x. 79, informs us that on the 20th November 1509 Guicciardini received from his father-in-law, Alamanni Salviati, the balance of his wife's dower, which he expended partly in the purchase of clothes for her and for himself, and partly in the purchase of furniture for his new house. A sum of —— *fiorini d'oro*

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NO.

368. Cf. No. 176.

370. But see No. 90, where the courtier is warned not to be too officious.

371. See *Livy*, Book xxiv. 25. "*On the extinction of a tyrant*," &c. Compare *Del Reggimento di Firenze*, Op. Ined. ii. 215: "Voltansi dunque tutti i malcontenti dello Stato che regge al tiranno vecchio; e se è mancato lui, alle sue reliquie . . . perchè si spera più facilmente potere riducere una tirannide, o uno dominio vecchio che farne uno di nuovo."

372. Cf. No. 342 and *note*.

373. Cf. No. 216 and *note*.

374. Cf. No. 108.

376. Cf. No. 38 and *note*.

377. Compare *Del Reggimento di Firenze*, Op. Ined. ii. 157: "Nessuno ha a Firenze tanti fondamenti che, se non è della linea di Cosimo, possa sperare di diventare capo; e chi aspira a questo, bisogna che ami la libertà e vivere populare, col mezzo del quale può solo diventare capo con autorità publica."

378. Cf. No. 121. Guicciardini here maintains the opinion, challenged by Machiavelli, *Principe*, cap. 9, "Che chi fonda in sul popolo, fonda in sul fango."

379. As to the "*Adorni and Fregosi of Genoa*," see *Ist. d'Italia*, Book vii. (vol. ii. pp. 112–113). "*Bernardo Rucellai*." Some account of the character and fortunes of this distinguished scholar is given by Guicciardini in the *Storia Fiorentina*, Op. Ined. iii. 326–328.

380. Cf. No. 19.

381. See the character of *Pope Julius* in the *Ist. d'Italia*, Book xi. (vol. iii. p. 53). As to *Pope Clement*, see No. 59 and *note*. In the *Ist. d'Italia*,

NO.

Book xvi. (vol. iv. pp. 67–69), the character of Clement is contrasted with that of Leo X.

383. Guicciardini in his *Storia Fiorentina*, cap. iv. Op. Ined. iii. 34. observes that the family of the Pazzi, although one of the richest and most important in Florence, had at no time any great political influence; "per essere tenuti troppo superbi e altieri; la quale cosa gli uomini in una città libera non possono comportare."

384. Cf. No. 56.

385. Cf. No. 55.

386. Cf. No. 45 and *note*.

387. Cf. No. 119.

388. Cf. No. 106 and *note*.

389. Guicciardini here combats the opinion of Machiavelli, *Discorsi*, i. 29, that a people is more grateful than a prince. The subject is also handled in the *Considerazioni sui Discorsi del Machiavelli*, Op. Ined. i. 43; and see No. 378 and *note*.

390. Cf. Nos. 11, 265.

391. Cf. No. 54.

392. Cf. No. 23 and *note*.

393. Cf. No. 115 and *note*.

In an autograph entry inserted between Reflections Nos. 393 and 394, Guicciardini indicates that the transcription, commenced at the beginning of the year 1528 from earlier note-books, had been interrupted, and that the Reflections which follow were begun to be added in April of that year.

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394. Cf. No. 182.

395. Cf. No. 162.

NO.

396. Cf. Nos. 42, 217.

397. Cf. No. 188.

398. "*It is of ancient wont in Florence*," &c. As had been noted by Dante:—

"E se ben ti ricorda, e vedi lume,
Vedrai te somigliante a quella inferma
Che non può trovar posa in su le piume,
Ma con dar volta suo dolore scherma."
Purg. vi. 148–151.

399. Cf. No. 22 and *note*.

401. Cf. No. 254 and *note*.

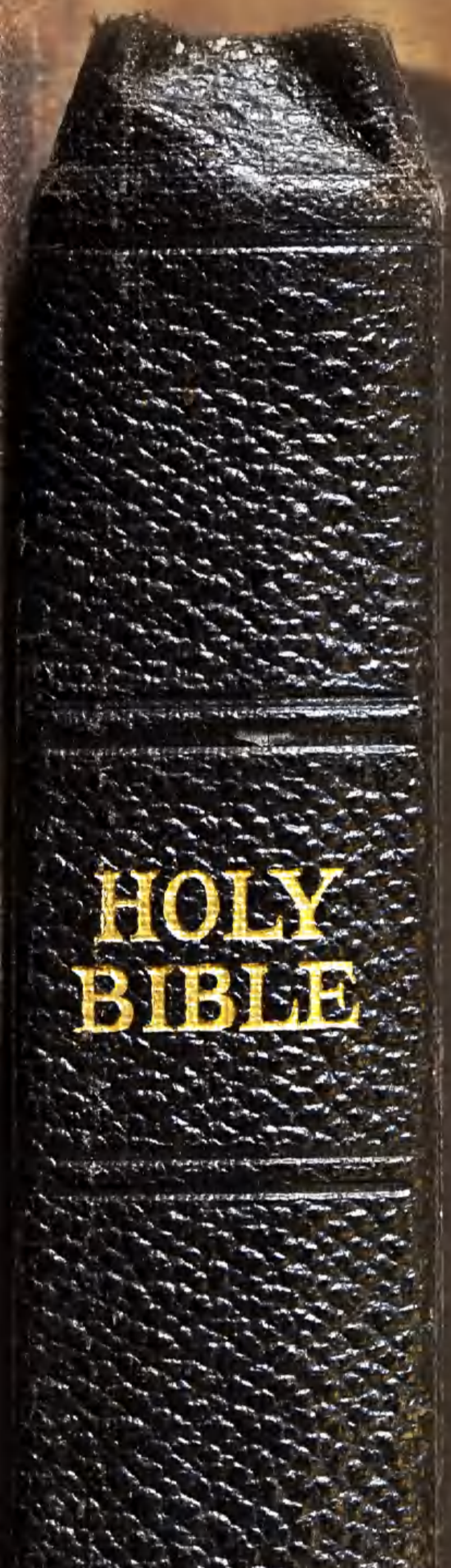
402. Cf. No. 21 and *note*.

403. "*O ingenia magis acria*," &c. Cited from letter of Petrarch to Boccaccio. Guicciardini substitutes *acria* for *cruda*, the word used by Petrarch.

The edition of Guicciardini's *Istoria d'Italia* from which the passages cited in these notes are taken, is that purporting to have been printed at Freiburg (but which was, in fact, printed in Florence), in the years 1775–1776, in four volumes quarto.

Other works of the author are cited from the *Opere Inedite*, published at Florence in ten volumes octavo, in the years 1857–1867, by Count Piero and Count Luigi Guicciardini, under the editorship of Signor Giuseppe Canestrini.

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